

PRIVATE SUITE

This Issue

AESTHETICS

VISUAL ARTISTS OF VAPORWAVE

A special look at the artists across the community



RETROSPECTIVE: LUXURY ELITE

The Joy of Aesthetics –

Seth Startix teaches simple ways to begin making great art

AND ALL THAT JAZZ

Behind the iconic cup design

THE FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARY:

Nobody Here The Story of Vaporwave

2000

#

Alone
ONLINE
April 17th

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ISSUE 12

APRIL 2020

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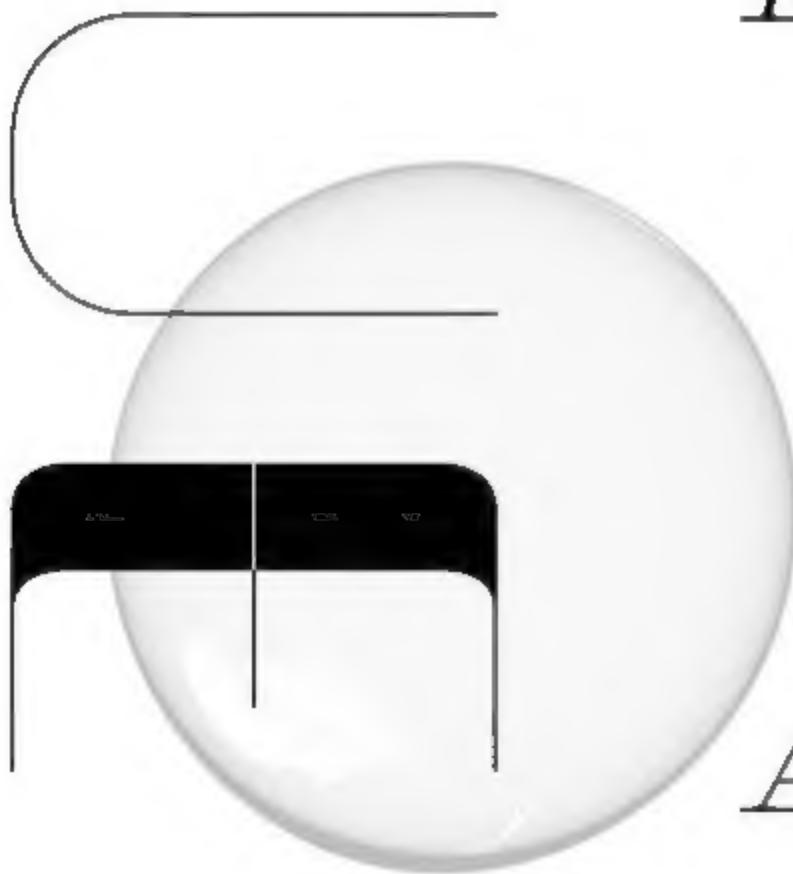
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LETTER

FROM A

HORSE

A wise man once said, "artists must suffer for their work; that is why it is called painting." I'm not sure how that is entirely relevant, but this is the release where we focus on the visual arts of vaporwave. Unlike most genres of music, the visuals of vaporwave play just as important of a role in the overall experience as the music. The same feelings of nostalgia that one feels listening to a classic vapor track can be felt when looking at a piece of art that exudes that sweet aesthetic. Sometimes the works can be interpreted as repetitive, or derivative, but is that really any different than other works that we have seen though the years? Renaissance painters using subjects from the Bible, George Rodrigue painting the same blue dog in every piece. The art of vaporwave has its own elements that make it stand out from the rest of the art world, and I hope you enjoy this issue where we feature works from some of the best artists in this community.

PONYDANZA

*Rich Siegel
Podcast/Operations Manager*

LETTER FROM THE ART DIRECTOR

Issue 12; look how far we've come. Every single time I've opened InDesign to work on the layout this issue, the thought completely engulfs me. Since joining formally as the lead designer for issue 4, it's been a lot of work (a LOT), but every single time I see the reaction the magazine gets, the appreciation the community has for what we're doing here—it makes the late nights and caffeine binges all worth it.

Right now, as you know, the world, and society at large is in quite an interesting state. Quarantine and social distancing have left most of what we know to be flipped upside down, not only in our daily routines, but also in what we're choosing to do with our free time. The sudden opportunity to explore our inner creative—and express ourselves through art via the web—to

an audience potentially worldwide is truly amazing. This issue we highlight some individuals doing exactly this with our special feature showcasing a collection of visual artists from the vaporwave community. We also take a look into the aesthetic VR utopian world of Cryptovoxels. We dip into the origins of the iconic design that has become ubiquitous with the word aesthetic, the solo jazz cup. Also, I offer a few tips and fundamentals of design to those of you who've found yourself wanting to start creating during all the increased "indoor time" you may be experiencing.

On a final note, I just want to say thank you for supporting what we're doing here. Be safe. Stay creative.

Seth Startix
Eric Weidner

2020:

THE YEAR OF THE LIVE SHOW



Billy Bugara
NEWS WRITER

EinTheMidle
ILLUSTRATOR

As vaporwave continues to move forward year after year, it seems as though endless progress is made in regards to establishing and solidifying this genre's status as one of equal worth to any other well-known area of musical or visual art. Its evolution, from being confined to the smallest and most niche parts of the internet in the early 2010s to its now well-known, well-respected, and well-admired prestige, is certainly a marvel in such a short time.

To gain this status, the grander community had to ever-so-efficiently integrate more than a few genre-based standards into its common lexicon, whether that was through introducing a plethora of subgenres over time, establishing a huge number of functioning labels, or even delving into the world of physical releases (now, one of the genre's most defining facets).

All of these examples give definite evidence of the fact that vaporwave is, without question, ■ wholly

deserving staple in the realms of contemporary music. And yet, even with this status all but set in stone, the community is continuing to explore and take on even more "traditional mediums" in music as a historic art form.

That exact scenario is being vividly depicted right at this very moment, in 2020, as a certain trend that has been brewing in small pockets of the community is beginning to reach a far more common and prevalent state. Just as past years are marked for the establishment of certain facets of this genre, such as any of the aforementioned examples, 2020 may just end up being the definitive "year of the vaporwave live show."

The idea of vaporwave in a traditional, live performance-based setting is not new in the slightest. As previously mentioned, the potential for live performance has been explored in slightly smaller capacities in past years, even dating as far back as 2016, with the likes





[Editor's Note: So... a lot has changed since this article was written. With the coronavirus causing social distancing guidelines to be suggested worldwide, so many plans for shows and events have been canceled or postponed. To be fair, there are many live events still happening, we're just not physically near each other experiencing them. In that way, we've been ahead of the curve on how to adapt to this new world. Let's enjoy these in the meantime, and look forward to the time we can do this in person again.]

of Blank Banshee and Skylar Spence expressing their willingness to perform in front of a live crowd. But it was the coming years that truly got the ball rolling as far as making this idea any sort of trend.

As the genre gained further popularity and its resources as a whole were beginning to increase, so too did its scope of influence and consistent presence. This resulted in the establishment of gatherings, festivals, and other related events that involved a physical connection, something that this internet-based movement had not been accustomed to for most of its history.

Not only did these events fill the physical void that had been absent for so many years from the most basic standpoint, but they also opened the doors for new avenues of musical expression just based on the element of physicality alone. The events called for live expression, and the most astute of vaporwave performers were there to fulfill this role perfectly.

From experienced acts who are all-too-familiar with the live setting, like George Clanton, all the way down to untried future funk artists who revelled in the setting simply due to the music they created, a scattering of live performances made the rounds of the community in the waning years of the 2010s; as they kept springing up, it is safe to say they demonstrated the community's interest in making live performance a more common endeavor.

The only way that this idea could be achieved feasibly was to expand outwards beyond the realms of

these infrequent community events. Vaporwave artists needed to get out and book their own shows just as any other musical act would and, throughout 2019 in particular, more and more acts would do exactly that. For it was this year, in particular, where the trend began to pick up pace; high profile acts began to notice the community's interest and admiration for this type of performance, its desire for live shows to become more of a mainstay than they already were, and they realized that the right thing to do was to simply act accordingly and fulfill the community's desires.

Sitting here in 2020, it can be reasonably claimed that vaporwave artists see the live setting as commonplace, as much so as releasing physicals or designing merch. The medium has been widely acclaimed by the community as a whole, and it seems as though the artists themselves share a similar admiration. Overall, it is a telling example of how moving toward the future and constantly progressing almost always results in a positive outcome in the world of vaporwave.

Given that the genre is moving into its second full decade, it is more imperative than ever to establish these tradition-based musical standards in order for a better and far more ideal future to occur. With the rise of the live show now in full effect, there is no question that this notion is occurring before the community's very eyes.



Nobody Here : The Story of Vaporwave

A Feature Length Documentary Film

Written by: IndyAdvant

Ahh- vaporwave, is there anything better in the world? Well, reader, you're in luck, because a vaporwave feature film documentary is coming your way! Director Chris Britten and producers Vincent Bailey and Jerome Sabourin will be travelling the world later this year to capture the history and amazingness of vaporwave into a capsule. A feature length documentary film, *Nobody Here*.

I'm really excited for this film. YouTube videos are great and all, but it will be really neat to see a high budget production for vaporwave in actuality. I'm hoping the film can provide a pleasant and impactful experience for both non-vaporwave fans and seasoned vaporwave professionals.

Logline

Nobody Here tells the story of vaporwave and its evolution into the internet's most aesthetic and celebrated micro-genre.

Synopsis

It's the sound of an echo reverberating a decade later; the definitive documentary about vaporwave, whose story is told by some of the most influential voices in the scene's history.

Find Out More

nobodyherefilm.com

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igg.me/at/nobodyherefilm

Themes & Challenges

Ultimately, the aim of this film is to tell the story of vaporwave and its evolution. But it's not only our story, it's a thousand stories from dozens of countries, all intertwined and yet unique.

We know that's ambitious and the hard work has already started.

The conduit for telling this story will include the artists, fans, labels and academics, and more. This won't be a generic talking heads documentary. We want to push boundaries and make it visually interesting for the viewer.

We'll be looking at the evolution of vaporwave, and it's associated sub genres, along with it's influence on popular culture. We'll examine its origins, but also consider its direction — and its future.

We'll consider the intellectual theories said to underpin vaporwave; visit the live events which have brought it off the computer screen and IRL; and we'll seek to answer the age old question: is it really vaporwave if it doesn't contain samples?

The beauty of this genre, and one of the reasons that we find this project so rewarding, is the breadth of its cultural reach. There's so much to explore, and we can't wait to bring it to life.

Crowdfunding

The *Nobody Here* Team has invested financially in the film, but the success of the project also requires the support of the vaporwave community.

This is a global story and production of the film will require a lot of travel, as well as technical support during the post production phase.

We already have interviews in place with key protagonists as far apart as the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, the UK, Australia and further afield.

However, the support of the community will not go unrewarded, and we have teamed up with My Pet Flamingo to deliver a range of perks. So, as well as getting access to the film itself, backing our campaign will also give supporters an opportunity to own exclusive, limited edition Merch options, including:

- **Vinyl, Cassette & MiniDisc Editions of the 'Companion Album'**
- **VHS & DVD Editions of the Film**
- **Caps**
- **T-Shirts**
- **Posters**

The *Companion Album* tells the "Story of Vaporwave" track by track, with a compilation of the scene's biggest artists — including (but not limited to): Saint Pepsi, Luxury Elite, 猫シ Corp. and many more.



Design by: Andrew Walker



Campaign Launch

The recent Covid-19 outbreak has led to the postponement or cancellation of a number of events recently, including Aessential2020 which was due to take place in Toronto in April.

The Crew were due to film at the event and in New York the week before. However, these interviews will now be rescheduled given the impact on safety and restrictions on international travel.

We initially planned to launch the campaign in March, but the outbreak of Covid-19 forced us to cancel pre-existing commitments for filming in New York and Canada. However, throughout the recent period we have continued to work on the film and will be ready to take things forward as soon international restrictions on filming are lifted. The campaign launched on April 17th, 2020, and our funding goal has now been met. We look forward to getting this film made as soon as we possibly can. Most importantly – stay safe, people.

Meet The Team

CHRIS BRITTEN - Director

BAFTA nominated producer and multi award winning director Christian Britten has received notable acclaim across the breadth of his portfolio. His work has ranged from Channel 4 series Random Acts, to feature documentaries, commercials and music videos.

His focus as a director in the arts has received noted attention through the documentary *Bullshit*, receiving Vimeo Staff Pick of the Month, in addition to tight collaborations with performance and music artists including World Beatbox Champion Shlomo. Chris looks for the human stories buried beneath the blinding noise of superficiality, and is passionate about using film as a tool for positive social influence.

In approaching *Nobody Here: The Story of Vaporwave*, the opportunity to push beyond a traditional documentary form is realised. Blending a mix of reality with the virtual, abstract with the obscure,

Chris' direction is one in which vaporwave will be truly realised and ensure the film will become an iconic statement of its very own as we explore the past, present and future of the most unique genre of our time.



VINCENT BAILEY - Producer

Vincent (Enzo) co-founded My Pet Flamingo and its sister label, TimeSlave Recordings, and has a background as a DJ in the Hardcore and Jungle-led "Pirate Radio" scene of the 90s.

He has a Master's degree in PR and a professional background in new media, which he cast aside to venture full time into label management and music production. Vincent produces vaporwave as one half of Timeshare'94, and synthwave as "Enzo Van Baelen", a pseudonym derived from his family's Belgian roots.



JEROME SABOURIN - Producer

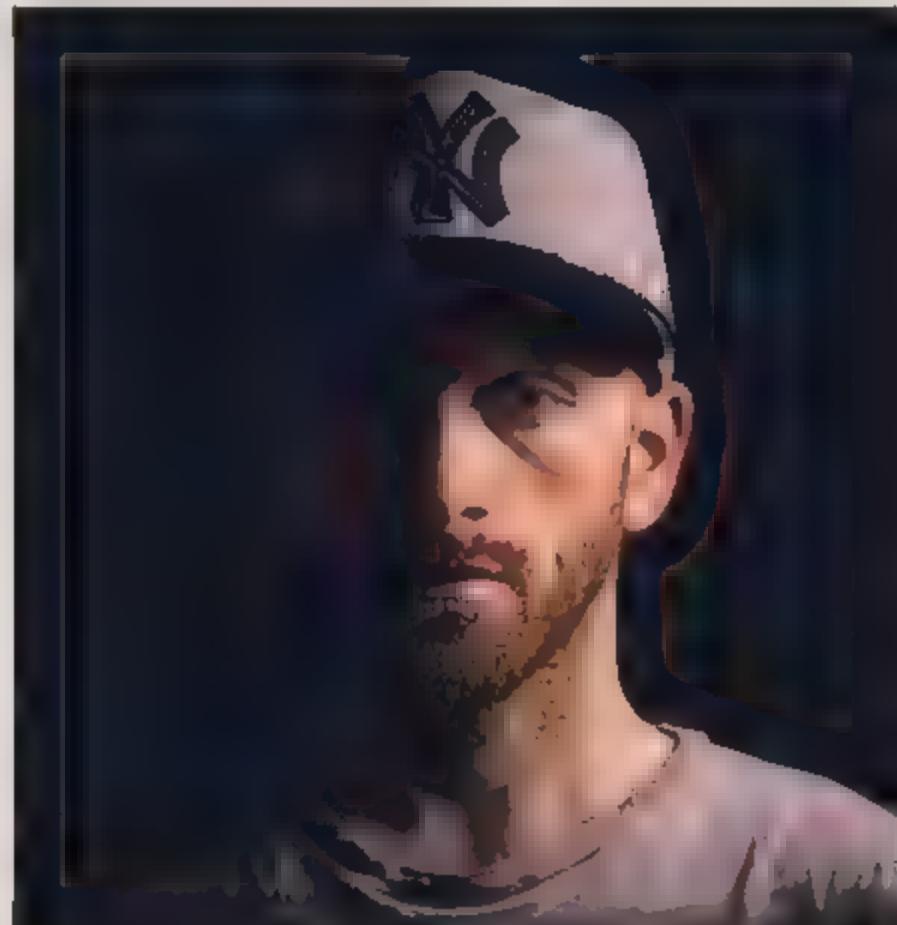
Jerome (Jay) Sabourin is a UK-based musician and composer. He produces vaporwave as Donor Lens - a collaborative project with Thom Hosken (Love in Dust), and as one half of Timeshare'94. His other projects include mixing and mastering as Neon Masters, synthwave production under his alter ego Kid Neon, and as drummer in the London synthpop band IVERSEN.

Jerome co-founded UK vaporwave label My Pet Flamingo in 2018, and its synthwave sister label TimeSlave Recordings.

VEEZ NIXON - Animator, Illustrator, Music Producer & VFX Artist.

With a unique style, Veez creates contemporary, innovative cross-media content with an impressive portfolio including work for Google and UK Drum and Bass stalwarts Hospital Records, and has produced album artwork for various artists globally.

His work has covered major game development, broadcast post production, internationally touring as an instrumentalist as well as a career in music production. Veez has been a long-time collaborator with director Britten, and has joined the team to help realise the visual and aesthetic representation of the on-screen world of vaporwave.





Quick Chat With the Producers

First off, thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to talk to me. So, vaporwave has now been “alive” for 10 years. What does vaporwave mean to you?

Vincent: It's hard to define vaporwave because it's so diverse and if you asked 100 people this question they'd all give you a different answer, but I guess for me and my personal relationship with vaporwave it boils down to an acute feeling of nostalgia. But there's also a DIY punk spirit which appeals to me, and the democratisation of technology has meant that we can all channel our creative impulses and take part in this scene. That's pretty special right?

Jerome: Yeah, the gap between the artist and the fan is almost non-existent with vaporwave because so many of the scene's fans are producers themselves. There's such an exciting spirit of collaboration out there right now.

For me, though, I do think there's some strength in the theory of vaporwave as “manufactured nostalgia.” I think there's sometimes a tendency to over hype the political angle though, because a lot of that imagery is ironic and throwaway.

Vincent: I guess this is why we wanted to make this film, because a lot's been said about vaporwave being ten years old now and it feels like a good time to assess its place in our cultural history - and what it means, not just to us but to the community itself.

Chris: That point's worth stressing: that this film isn't about us trying to imprint our interpretation of vaporwave, it's about telling the story through a range of voices - fans, artists, labels, and the academic side.

Why do you find importance in capturing this story in a time capsule?

Chris: I'm not sure I see it as a time capsule piece either, because there's so much happening in vaporwave now that is a key part of the story. They said it was dead, but look at it now...

Vincent: For me it's about documenting the history in a permanent way; archiving it, if you like.

When you start researching a project like this you stumble across forgotten gems, but you also find broken links from deleted Bandcamp accounts and videos which have long been removed by YouTube. I don't like the idea that the internet can so easily delete its history, and while we can't cover everything in this film, we can try to capture some of that energy.

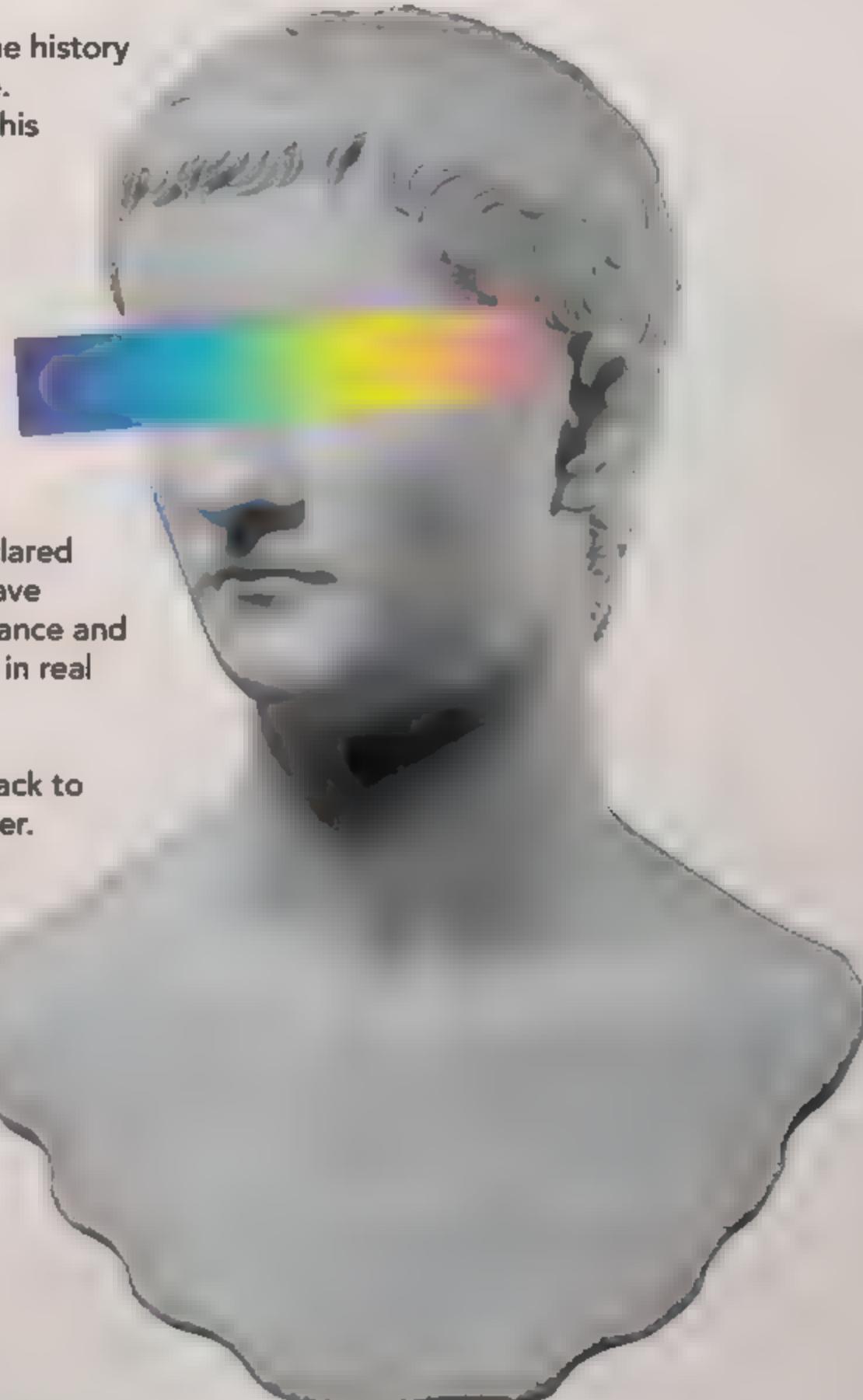
Jerome: Vaporwave is constantly reinventing itself and constantly being declared dead, but in the last year most of us will have seen a dramatic shift towards live performance and events where fans and artists can meet up in real life.

Vincent: I still get goosebumps thinking back to [100%] Electronicon in Brooklyn last summer. Because that for me is just as big a part of the story of vaporwave as Ecco Jams or anything else. Thankfully there's loads of great footage out there.

What are your thoughts of the progression, journey, and growth of the umbrella genre over these 10 years?

Vincent: There's a definite shift from part of the scene at least towards sample free vaporwave, which on the one hand suggests that the artists are growing in confidence and proficiency - but is also a natural move with more and more eyes on the scene, and its sometimes liberal approach to sampling and copyright. But there will always be the purists who don't see that as "true" vaporwave.

For me, there's room for it all. I'm constantly soaking up new and old vaporwave — not least because we run a record label and because we are always on the hunt for interesting new sounds.





Jerome: You can't really get bored of vaporwave because there's a hundred sub genres out there to explore. But one of the approaches I find creatively interesting as a producer myself (Jerome is one half of UK duo Donor Lens) is the idea of sampling your own music and then applying the traditional techniques of vaporwave to that original material. Runners Club 95 do it especially well.

Chris: I've been aware of vaporwave for a few years, but didn't realise quite how much of a scope the genre has across society until I started researching properly for this film. There are so many sub genres, and niche artistic aesthetics that complement each other and interweave. You can chart the course from its echo jam roots to the current crop of vaporwave artists - but it's a complicated family tree, that's for sure.

As a filmmaker I'm certainly interested in exploring the dichotomy between those who want to move closer towards original composition and the artists who'd prefer the scene to stay closer to its plunderphonic roots.

Where will vaporwave go from here, and what are your hopes for what the film will do to complement the movement?

Chris: There's no doubt that telling this story is a huge responsibility, and we're all taking that very seriously — we want to pay tribute to the artists and fans alongside exploring avenues of thought and making it accessible for new audiences. Having Vincent & Jay as producers really adds the layers of integrity as they have a professional relationship with the artists.

For me, there's also the dynamic of the film itself and my desire to push beyond the traditional talking-head style documentary. I hope that the film will become an iconic statement of its own, but I do think that a film like this can do huge good for the scene if the story is told well. We're exploring arguably the most creative and innovative musical genres of our time.

Vincent: I think George Clanton's right to say that the live vaporwave scene will continue to grow, and that can only be a good thing for a genre which was born online and which has spent so much of its life existing only in the virtual realm.

In terms of the film itself, we want it to be something that we can all be proud of. But we



know the challenges involved and the amount of source material to discuss. So we will have to take some difficult decisions as the project evolves. But that's why we've got a great team together to support us — all people with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the scene.

Jerome: We've also got some of the most influential vaporwave producers involved in this film, as well as some of the most iconic labels, and one of the most interesting aspects of this story has to be the perspective of the fans themselves.

I think it has huge potential and we'll be working night and day to make a film the scene can embrace, and the response so far has been amazing.

Other Credits

The Nobody Here team also includes a number of significant others; writers whose expertise and influence will come to play key roles as the project progresses. Special thanks to Eric Hughes, Indy Advant, Pad Channington, Musics the Hangup, Andrew Walker - and many more without whom the film will not be possible.

Well, it wouldn't be a documentary without interviews! The film will include testimonials and interviews from established producers both from early in the life of vaporwave through the current era. Look forward to Saint Pepsi, Luxury Elite, 猫シ Corp., Nmesh, 貓 Skeleton, Dan Mason, and many more.

Accompanying the film will be two items of lovely music. First, an original score to underlie the film as a soundtrack, composed for the film in the traditional vaporwave style. Second, a vaporwave compilation album that spans the entire history of vaporwave from 2010 to now, featuring selections from all the eras.

The film will premiere at film festivals and film circuits around the world, as well as online for everyone to enjoy.

Crowdfunding Campaign

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GEOMETRIC LULLABY COMES THROUGH WITH A DYNAMIC DUO OF 猫 シ CORP. REPRESSES

Billy Bugara

NEWS WRITER

The always consistent and always creative label Geometric Lullaby certainly proved themselves such as they kicked off 2020 with two landmark repressions from vapor legend 猫 シ Corp. in the form of *News At 11* and *Palm Mall Mars*.

Fans of both the label and 猫 シ Corp. the artist were practically begging for the repressions to drop once they were revealed in a video on Pad Chennington's YouTube channel, solidifying the significance that both releases have in the minds of vaporwave aficionados.

The quality of the pressings could not have been better, with each vinyl reinforcing the themes of the albums in such a vivid manner. *News At 11* features a splatter paint design of red, white, and blue, almost too characteristic of the album's America-centric thematics. The record evokes an image of a firework going off, adding to the aforementioned theme by calling to mind the nation's Independence Day celebrations. While the former explodes over a translucent clear background, *Palm Mall Mars* blasts us with an encompassing burst of

pure orange, alluding strongly to the planet that the album takes its name and setting from. The shade of orange used on the pressing also works as an ideal complement to the futuristic and new-age tones that the album finds itself so saturated in from a thematic perspective.

Though the discs themselves are well done, we cannot overlook the actual music which stands out among Geometric Lullaby's releases. Even among 猫 シ Corp.'s own loaded discography, these albums are titans of the lineup. Even so, the two releases achieve that status in very different manners.

Though these two projects may effectively compare in their critical acclaim, they are representative of two tellingly different musical approaches from 猫 シ Corp. Originally released in 2016, *News At 11* tells its extensively depressive story through the lens of television-based motifs, serving to send the listener into a flurry-filled daze of commercials and news clippings alike.

2018's *Palm Mall Mars*, on the other hand, sees 猫 シ Corp. working in arguably his most notable domain, the nostalgia-driven sights and

sounds of mallsoft. This project's predecessor, the original *Palm Mall*, helped to define this subgenre as a vaporwave mainstay, and it has since become one of the genre's most classic releases. The Mars variant takes a futuristic look at the fantasies presented on *Palm Mall*, and it does so with just as much beauty and grace.

By choosing to repress these two formidable projects as a duo, Geometric Lullaby is essentially paying respect to two different sounds and, really, two different eras of 猫 シ Corp.'s iconic career up to this point. They are giving fans a taste of the past with a classic release like *News At 11*, while also featuring *Palm Mall Mars*, its status steadily growing to a similar level despite being less than two years old.

Fans have a great deal to be excited about with these releases, and they certainly have a lot to appreciate given the efforts made by Geometric Lullaby to make this release one for the ages, a testament to their status as a quintessential vaporwave label.

UP AND COMERS 2020

THE COMPILATION ALBUM



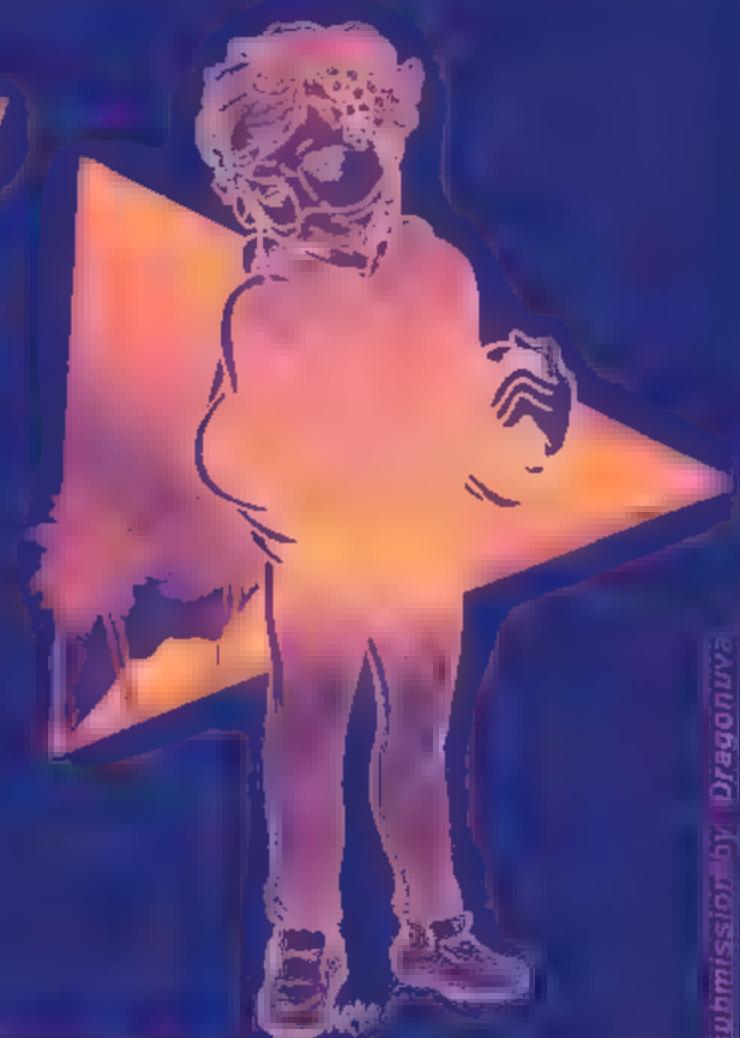
Over 24 hours of music from the brightest new talent
in the vaporwave scene.

Featuring tracks by Donor Lens, EchoBBT / T-Mak, MiraiCult,
Bathroom Plants, desert sand feels warm at night, DATAGIRL,
Sev. spade chimney, ASVMR, Z.E.R.O and many more!

Digital download and limited cassette available at
halleyontapes.bandcamp.com

PRIVATE SUITE

PODCAST



APE submission by Dragonfly

PrivateSuiteMag.com/podcast



Synthetic Pleasure

REVIEWED AND EXPLORED BY:
deliriously...daniel



"My world is packaged for me."

Does vaporwave really mean anything? For every academic of internet aesthetics who haunts you with logical laments for lost futures, there will be a dozen or more folks who just like to groove out to slowed-down '80s music.

Much like vaporwave's growing nebula of diverse microgenres, the truth behind the scene as some alleged ennui-powered agent of snarky disruption is a bit hazy—and highly dependent on the artist who made it. Sure, prismatic diamonds in the fluff like *News at 11* or *REDEFINING THE WORKPLACE* have zeitgeist-gazing concepts either intended or heavily implied, but in issues-worth of interviews with some of vaporwave's most prolific artists, album origins are more often driven by pure emotion or serendipitous soundscaping.

Perhaps vaporwave essentials collectively hold the meaning, as they form one giant case study about just how immersive and intimate the internet has become in daily life—so much so that it's birthed a music genre that's growing into an art movement. But who could have foreseen today's digital bedlam, with its liberated (yet pillaged) freedom of information

and brilliantly interconnected (yet globally disruptive) social media landscape?

With its principal question, "Is reality obsolete?", director Iara Lee's 1996 documentary *Synthetic Pleasures* explores just that. Serving as a dazzling ancestral artifact of the vaporwave movement, it's a film made by future-sighted techno-trendsetters, for those interested in the kind of radical possibility of mind expansion promised by emerging innovations. A feast for the senses, it's packed with trippy visuals and a soundtrack featuring many of the era's best electronic producers. Together, Lee and a sprawling cast of sagacious early adopters of eccentric technology question how far computers will—or should—push the ethical and anatomical limits of humankind.

To say that this conjures a deep, static-bearing tempest of feelings when watched today, is an understatement.





"An Immutable Itch"

On a high level, *Synthetic Pleasures* is a story of transformation: how technology has become humankind's latest armament in our neverending evolutionary conquest of nature—both the literal sort and our own inner impulses. Intercut with gameplay from SimCity, the documentary's voice-overs compare harnessed processing power to primal drives for control, godliness and immortality.

Such a sentiment was the film's original inspiration.

"I read about this indoor beach in Japan," Tara Lee said in an interview with Private Suite. "It was such a large place with this retractable roof, and ironically, it was right next to the real beach and I was like...wow, you know, everything is becoming so cyber and virtual. We always try to use technology to adapt nature to us, instead of us adapting to nature."

This polyethylene paradise Lee focuses on was the now-demolished Seagaia Ocean Dome in Miyazaki, Japan. Built in 1993 and surviving until 2007, the Ocean Dome is one of *Synthetic Pleasures'* most striking environments. For, despite the absurdity of its painted-on skyline and uncanny "sanitized" reality, this sprawling facility and its simulated weather system evoke a certain sense of longing in today's new era of uncertain climatic futures. With "12,000 square metres of sandy beach, crushed from 600 tonnes of stones; an 'ocean' six times larger than an Olympic pool, filled with 13,500 tonnes of unsalted, chlorinated water kept at a piping hot 28°, and a wave-machine with 200 variations,"

space safe from great whites and greenhouse gases alike suggests a comforting destination for any generation.

And the Ocean Dome isn't alone. *Synthetic Pleasures* likewise enters equally artificial Golf and Ski Domes, forming a holy trinity of bubbled biospheres that underscore the documentary's opening argument that the tourism industry, with its expected outcomes and mitigated risks, was a midwife for virtual reality.

VR indeed is one of Lee's other golden calves here. Budding transhumanists suggest that VR will dissolve lines between mind and body, allowing not only for extraterrestrially gratifying simulations but also for the disabled to regain perceived articulation.

It is admittedly funny to hear pensive musings about the dilution of ecstasy and absconson of reality over footage of proto-Roblox-esque VR skiing graphics—or a haunting choir punctuating a simulated wedding whose corporeal bride and groom kiss while wearing "eye phones." Yet the questions posed are as relevant today. What if we can't live in the worlds we create? Once we've catalogued nature, will we still need

it? In the end, the film's innocent optimism surrounding VR conflicts with the expensive gimmick many see it as today.

"VR came to fruition at a troubled moment in human history," R.U. Sirius, co-founder of the late-20th century cyberpunk zine MONDO 2000 who was also consulted for *Synthetic Pleasures*, told *Private Suite*. "So what could have been the main event is now a sideshow in a likely apocalypse."

Such a pattern recurs in the film, where for every radically insightful prediction *Synthetic Pleasures* makes for the psychosocial problems technology could produce, there is another, sunnier suggestion that grimly juxtaposes what 2020 viewers know of a post-adolescent internet's overdeveloped disarray.

"It's quite surreal to think that, at that time, it was just the beginning of something that was going to become totally mainstream. It's kind of a historical film now. And I think a lot of my films end up having these roles," Lee adds. Though *Synthetic Pleasures* was among her first documentary releases, she has since produced many films following creative activism in developing countries, supporting human rights organizations through her Cultures of Resistance network.

"It seems to me that I'm always on the cusp of something that is going to happen, and it becomes huge."

"There are only two tragedies in life: one is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it."

After taming the face of the earth, *Synthetic Pleasures* moves on to discuss how technology is reframing our own faces. Lee and her team interview a number of body modification marks and performance artists alike, questioning whether there is a line between literal freedom of expression and unnatural anatomical augmentation.

It's fascinating—and at one point, even stomach churning—to watch someone willingly resculpt their forehead to mimic the Mona Lisa, as well as a bit disappointing to know that plastic surgery is now hardly recognized as a creative practice. Instead, it bears shallow connotations of cosmetic adherence to traditional beauty standards, while any suggestion of supahuman mods is relegated to science fiction.

"I think it's a fascinating area of exploration," R.U. Sirius said about the union of tech and flesh. "I think decorative mutations may be more desired than practical ones—a continuation of the modern primitive tendencies of the 20th Century. Body hackers are already giving themselves microchips in their fingers and other places."

"I'm fascinated by the possibility that we could effectively change skin color. I wonder who will be the most upset by this incursion into identity and trust."

"Open your minds, your hearts, your very soul..."

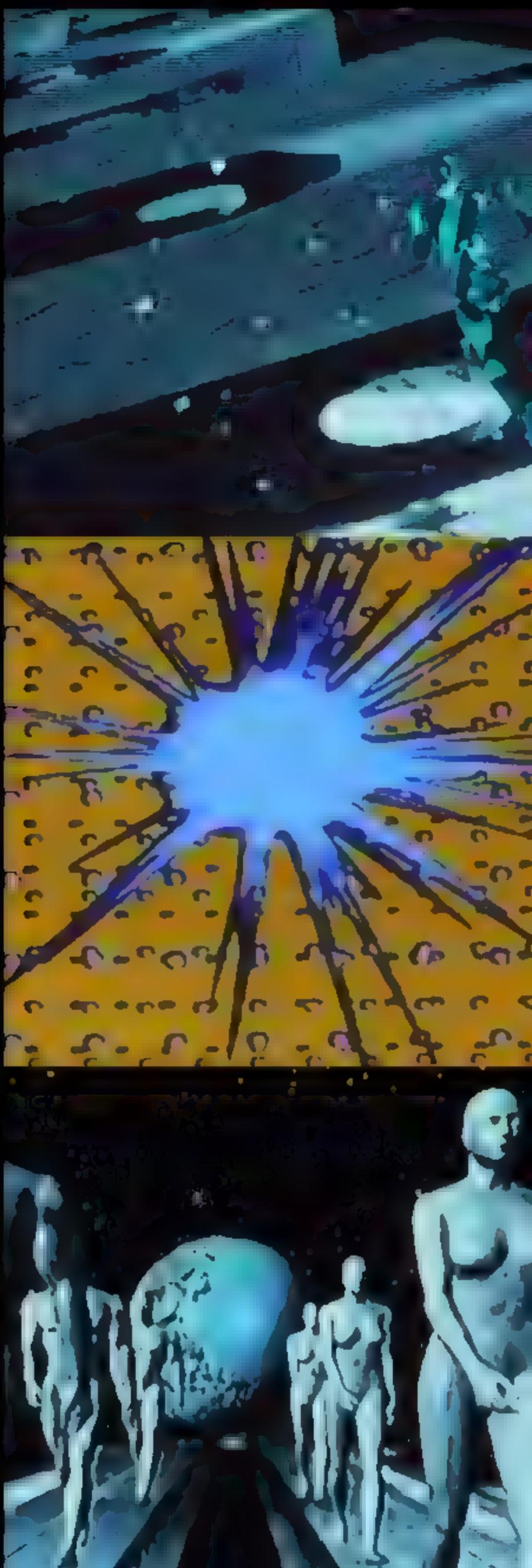
Perhaps more reassuring is the film's subsequent interface with the rave community, speaking with individuals who celebrate surgical, psychedelic, and even sexual technology's ability to assist those with relationship difficulties, body image issues, or dysmorphia in many forms. Likewise, dwellers at the first internet cafes express how communicating online helps them come out of their shells, as they can finally pause to think out what they're going to say.

It is these moments of solidarity and camaraderie that show *Synthetic Pleasures* at its most human—highlighting how technology could lead to a more accepting and intersectionally integrated world. Yet, they are also the most poignant bits, as these earliest inklings of social media's rise couldn't possibly account for things like disinformation and deep-faking.

"Marshall McLuhan predicted that a global village would lead to tribal conflict...maximal disagreement on all points," Sirius continues.

"More than any time before, people are starting to view speech and expression as violence and an existential threat. To detourne Sartre, *Hell is other people's tweets*. Some emphasize how the algorithms of companies like Facebook amplify and encourage the ugly stuff that grabs people's attention and provokes emotional responses."

Those gather crowds. Totalist opinions crowd out nuance. But I think the main thing that we've learned is that there are a lot of people out there infected by bad memes and memplexes and they're available to be loaded up with even more. It's not just the big bad corporations. The humans weren't ready."



"A question of who wields the sword"

Synthetic Pleasures closes with a collective reflection on technology's highs and lows, with Lee even today echoing the film's nervous sense of hope, as she reflects on seeing monks laughing with selfie sticks even in rural Bhutan.

"I would say life is very full of good and bad and you know, everything is hypocritical. Everything is contradictory. Everything has the double edge sword and we just have to navigate and make the most of it."

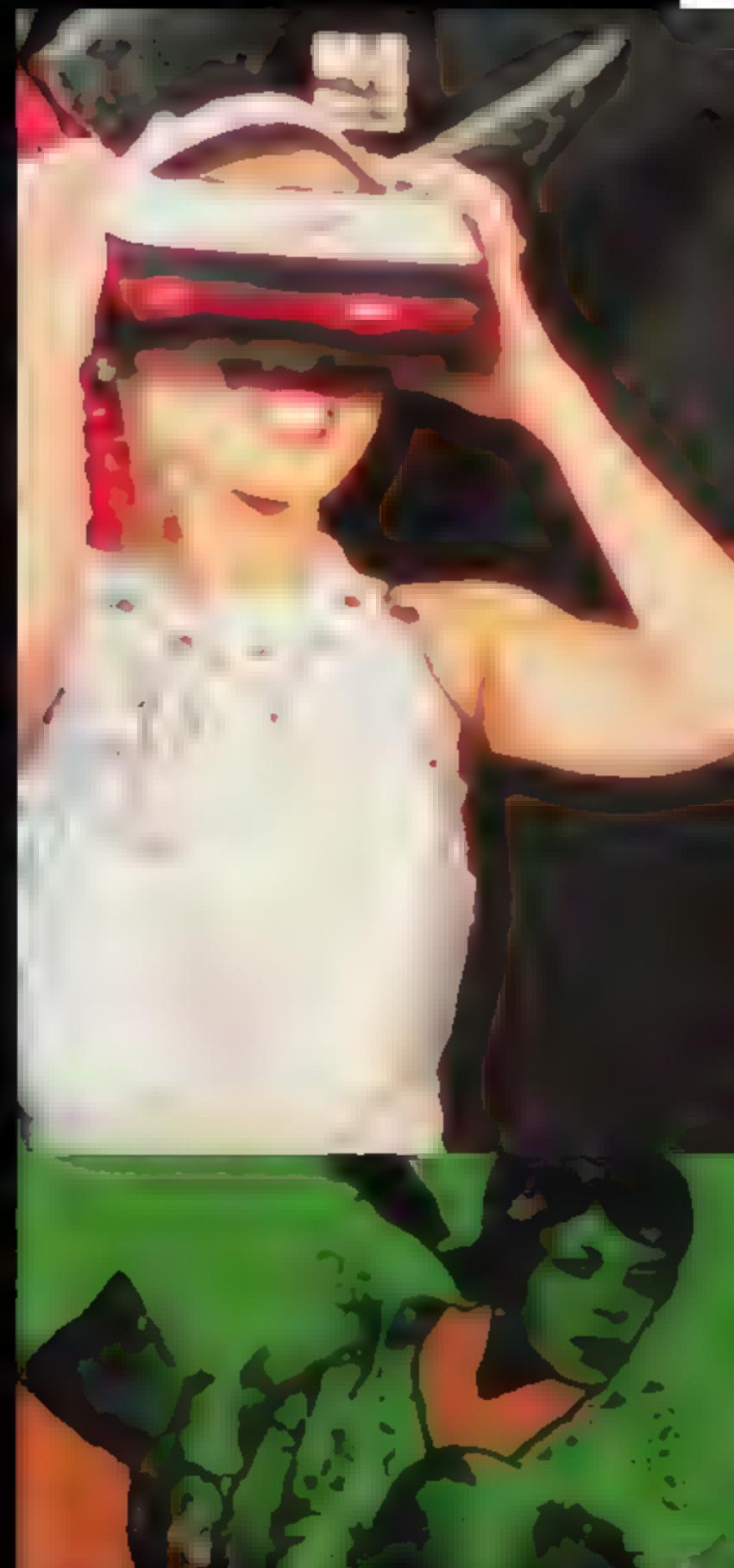
The documentary leaves its warmest wishes with the new generation—those children of the time, referred to affectionately as budding "high tech hippies," who are now 20–30 something Zennials and the first digital natives. The filmmakers encourage these precocious pioneers to use these promising resources to build up a better world, rather than winnowing away what we have.

"In essence, our generation is writing the constitution for the future of history. We're creating many things that cannot be undone. And yet we have no choice, there's no such thing as standing still," concludes Jaron Lanier, a renowned computer philosophy writer whose company VPL Research Inc. sold the first ever VR sets. He now advocates for deleting all social media.

"The key to the future is whether we'll have a culture that celebrates imagination, that celebrates play, that is adventurous and fun, or whether we'll have a future where we continue to seek greater and greater power."

As vaporwave continues to expand its influence, Lanier's words linger long after *Synthetic Pleasures'* credits. Is it all just fun, or could this music be a conduit for the documentary's hypothesized future? Could such a community be the world-wide welcoming network that overcomes the web's nihilistic reckoning?

And could glitched-out Greco-Roman busts ultimately make us more human?



Synthetic Pleasures is free to watch in its entirety on Lara Lee's *Cultures of Resistance* YouTube Channel.

Film stills courtesy of *Caipirinha Productions*.

In Fabric Tugs on All the Right Threads: A Film Review

by: gbanas92

You'd be forgiven for being unfamiliar with *In Fabric*. Apart from brief theatrical runs in the UK and US (to little fanfare) in 2019, the film currently resides on streaming platforms. This is likely for the best as, frankly, the film may be too strange for the average moviegoer. *In Fabric* represents director Peter Strickland's third feature film (coming off the heels of 2014's brazenly bizarre *The Duke of Burgundy*), and perhaps his best yet. The movie is a mixture of many things, but it is predominantly a psychological horror film (with particular emphasis on the giallo movement of Italian cinema) combined with more traditional drama.

The film displays characteristics of a few other genres here and there as well, along with it showcasing a rather cheeky sense of humor. Ultimately, it can most comfortably be called a horror movie, as *In Fabric* follows the trajectory of a cursed dress as it takes out victims one at a time in rural England. The script is simultaneously sparse and dense, offering a fairly straightforward literal narrative that drives unrelentingly forward, but with plenty of subtext that does a good job of not disturbing the main narrative. Should you want to dig deeper into the movie, there's a lot more than meets the eye. But if you just watch the film on a surface level, and leave it at that, it's still quite the treat.

The film represents a masterful execution of a startlingly strong vision on all fronts, not the least of which is its visual choices. Of particular interest to vaporwave fans (especially mallsoft fans) is the aesthetic of the dress' "home" - a downright gorgeous '70s style department store called "Dentley & Sopers", complete with pneumatic tubes, neon lights, and the like. The film only visits this location a handful of times, but it's a treat with each and every trip. This includes one memorably disturbing scene involving a mannequin that's a bit too graphic to

get into details about. It's the kind of thing that must be seen to be believed. "Dentley & Sopers" is also home to a gorgeous department store catalogue that is so striking, we hope there are plans to print and sell it at some point. All of this beauty is heightened even further by cinematographer Ari Wegner's exquisite camerawork. The shot composition is flawless, offering a plethora of immaculate shots, any one of which would have been enough for the entire film to coast on. This mastery extends beyond the department store scenes, as the more rural settings benefit from a great use of lighting.

The cursed dress present in the film is a deep crimson, and as such is able to stand out in many darkly lit scenarios. The film does precisely this, making the most of the natural contrast offered by the red and black. Every element of the film's style works in perfect cohesion, lending extra credence to the idea that *In Fabric* is a work of art rather than "merely" a movie.

Not to be outdone by the cinematography and set design are the performances. The lead of the film, Sheila, is dutifully tackled by Marianne Jean-Baptiste, who delivers an exceptional performance. Baptiste grounds the movie with a surprisingly poignant display of emotion, as Sheila is dealing with a recent split from her husband as well as the growing divide between her and her son. This all takes place in the presence of her son's oddball girlfriend (played by Gwendoline Christie of *Game of Thrones* fame). This relationship is really the driving force of the story, even as more and more inexplicable things start to happen because of the dress. There is an emotional core that allows the movie to saunter right up to the edge of being "too weird" - without quite spilling over into madness.

Another area of interest to vaporwave fans lies in the film's soundtrack, courtesy of Cavern of Anti-Matter, a Berlin-based group.

While the music is not vaporwave by any means, much like the rest of the film - it has a hypnotizing quality to it. This is especially true of a TV commercial for the aforementioned "Dentley & Sopers", which utilizes arpeggiated synths that both enchant characters and viewers alike in a nearly mystical fashion. The not-so-subtle occult elements at play in the department store render the ominous score even more impactful. Add to that the fact that the soundtrack is used very sparingly, and you get a massively successful score. A great soundtrack knows when to be absent as much as to be present, and this is an area where the film especially shines. The music takes the form of a narrative device in its own right, rather than merely as a guide to inform the audience how they should feel. This results in long swathes of time where the audio consists solely of the diegetic naturally occurring sounds of everyday life.

Any time the music begins, that tends to mean something significant is on the precipice. From top to bottom, every thread of *In Fabric* is deserving of praise. Assuming you know what to expect and have a vested interest in the weirder corners of cinema (and since you're reading this, you probably already like vaporwave, a weird corner of a different medium in its own right), the film is just about perfect. A brilliant vision from a brilliant director, all presented in the most perfectly stylish package imaginable. Much like the dress in the film, *In Fabric* presents a perfect fit for the cinephile in you.



Rapidfires

*We dig around the internet
so you don't have to*

Sentimental

by Paradise of Yesterday



Lush arrangements abound as Paradise of Yesterday's newest release offers a startlingly relaxing foray into a luxurious bath of ambient wonder. *Sentimental* offers a release where all of the various tracks hit with a pristine clarity that allows their interplay to be truly wonderful. Rather than letting sounds blend into an amorphous vapor blob, this album showcases each individual tone in its own right, ensuring there are no dips in quality from the piano-heavy opener, "Beauty," all the way through to the album's conclusion on "Melancholy."

gbanas92

The North Face Plaza

by Crystal Court



Even without the album art to draw upon, the mall imagined in this release by Crystal Court is clearly a cavernous one. The general chatter of the bustling crowd is so front and center that it almost induces anxiety. The looming wall of sound created by the swarm of consumers swims in and out of clarity with a variety of commercials and song snippets breaking things up. The end result is a compelling mallsoft album that prioritizes the "mall" over the "soft."

gbanas92

Worship Nite

by Vacation Bible School

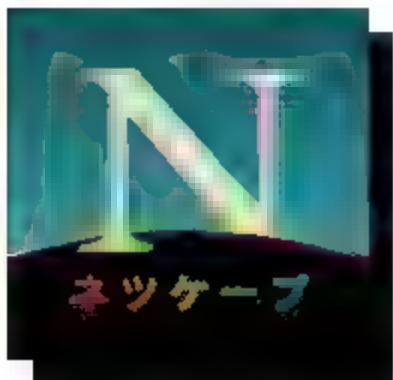


The burgeoning churchwave subgenre keeps chugging along, as Vacation Bible School returns with yet another killer release. Their latest, *Worship Nite*, offers something a little different from what we've come to expect sonically. Normally, Vacation Bible School's releases feel as if you stepped into a particularly lively church. This time however, it almost feels as if the congregation found their way to the nearest mall. Maybe they rented out the dying husk of a mall to hold their annual fair? Hopefully, the food court has more to offer than the body and blood of Christ.

gbanas92

NETSCVPE

by NETSCVPE



Imagine plugging in to your old dialup modem and finding a gateway to a forgotten internet that's teeming with new life. You explore this world with *NETSCVPE*, a blazing fast, modern browser. The information trickles in, granting you access to a pristine virtual wilderness, but your browser processes it at a relentless pace, serving up fragments the instant they reach your computer. It would feel something like this album: a pulsing stream of cold synthesizers syncopated with a barrage of frenetic drumming.

DJ Nonn

The Final Exhibit

by Mission Indigo

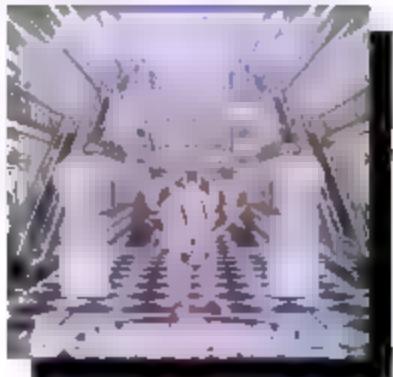


The Final Exhibit puts Austin artist Mission Indigo's production talent on display with snappy drums and subtly emotive samples. This classic style vapor album will take you on a beat-laden journey through drama, action, and romance. If you like a sense of adventure to accompany your '80s nostalgia, get yourself a ticket to this exposition!

DJ Nonn

BOMBERMALL

by ANGELFVCE



Welcome to *BOMBERMALL* – the vaporization of the Bomberman soundtrack you never knew you needed! Songs from the Bomberman universe blaring from tinny overhead speakers bring you straight to the heart of an expansive commercial paradise. Hazy drum loops and the noise of a bustling crowd furnish each scene of the lethargic muzac with a compelling sense of life and motion. Whether you know the source material or not, *BOMBERMALL* makes for a consumer-friendly gateway to mallsoft while packing enough product for platinum-class shoppers.

DJ Nonn

LUXURY ELITE RETROSPECTIVE



EXCELSIOR誕生。

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BALLADE SPORTS
CR-X

車種別専用ボディキット・専用ホイール・専用マフラー・エンジンセレクション・燃費測定

Few artists are able to capture the swagger, the glitz, the downright groove of vaporwave like Luxury Elite. In a genre often full of melancholy and ennui, Lux stands out for making vaporwave fun. If artists like christoff and HKE are the pointed, critical accusers of vaporwave's ambiguous relationship with consumerism, Luxury Elite is about enjoying what devours you; embracing what you can to bring yourself joy; loving the glitter of skyscrapers, the bubbles in champagne, fine dresses and fine dining. And in a genre as diverse and sprawling as vaporwave, this light to the shade should be welcomed and appreciated.

Lux started her career with the triple-hook 2012 releases of *I*, *II* and *III*, the albums displaying, right out the gate, the kind of aesthetic focus which would come to define Lux: lugubrious '80s samples, a slow and meandering warble through passionate titles, like "secret lover," "romantixx," "helpless," and "spotlight dance." Lux loves love and loves writing gooey moonlight jams.

In 2013, Luxury Elite released *rose quartz*, a little more sophisticated, with tighter production and more focused energy. Lux really had a vision here and, now, the chops to achieve it. She was just looking for a hook to pull her into the vaporwave major leagues.

That came with the legendary *Late Night Delight*, a collaboration with another one of vaporwave's bon vivants, Saint Pepsi. The split album blends Lux's slinky city delights with Saint Pepsi's booming future funk party. Featuring premier Lux cuts "silk," "schaumburg," and "nightlife" and ending with Saint Pepsi's iconic "Enjoy Yourself," *Late Night Delight* has become one of vaporwave's defining albums, a perfect example of just how darn fun this genre can be when it puts its mind to it.

Through 2013 and 2014, Luxury Elite entered her "imperial phase," producing a steady stream of albums that would further crystallise her sound and inspire legions of

producers and writers to get down and dirty with those grainy '80s samples. *TV Party* and *With Love* deserve special mention for their polish and purpose, each album themed around a certain vibe: *TV Party*'s invocation of technology and futurism and *With Love*'s sappy love songs laying the schmooze on thicker than ever.

2014's *1017 WAVE II* saw Luxury Elite taking a step out of the bustle of New York and into the sprawling valleys of California. The album's pink and blue artwork, with the blonde model's hair swept back in the wind, is a tasty twist on Lux's traditional dusky vibes. A brilliant album in its own right, it's clear that Lux was now in a mood to reinterpret her own discography, becoming a little more reflective and perhaps building to some kind of crescendo.

That would come with 2015's masterpiece *World Class*. An album that works as a perfect encapsulation of what Luxury Elite was and can be, the soundtrack to night time in Tokyo, London, New York: Standing in the city street watching the giant monoliths of light rise up or looking down at the street from their commanding heights. This is an artist performing at the apex of their powers, with deep reverberating production, a truly artful cover and imposing, totemic title. The coy sashay of "S.W.A.K," "Parliament Blue's" pulsing synths, the playful waterfall of "Crystal," and the huge curtain fall of "Forever"—the hits are unrelenting. Crate-digging sample choices, stretching from L'Affair to Selena and Michael Bedford, complete the package. This is a Rolex in album form.

Yet the story isn't over. While Lux's releases have ebbed since the heady days of 2014, 2016 brought the urban romance of *Noir* and 2018 the surprise album *Prism*; a lovely throwback to the jumpy days of *I*, *II* and *III*. Wherever the future takes our intrepid explorer of everything fancy, fun and expensive, the vaporwave community waits ready to take her hand.

END

Cryptovoxels VR Experience - Sadplanet Virtual Review

Written by IndyAdvant

Come with me to an aesthetically fantastical world of wonder and imagination, Cryptovoxels — a user owned virtual world, powered by the Ethereum blockchain. Players can buy land and build stores and art galleries. Editing tools, avatars, text chat and voice chat are built in.

Explore Galleries, Artists, Portals and curated Collections; the world is comprised of parcels, which are represented as a cryptocollectible, and owned by different people on Ethereum. Cryptovoxels parcels are for sale now on OpenSea. Load up cryptovoxels.com in your browser, decide whether or not you want to play in VR (yes, this supports VR), and hit play.

Cryptovoxels is built using webvr and written in babylon.js and runs in the browser on desktop, mobile and VR headsets. Node.js is used for the multiplayer component. As per the name, the world is built up of minecraft-style voxels, parcel owners can use the in-world building tools to create shops, galleries or any other kind of building they find in a city.

The service is updated quite frequently -- check out the blog at <https://blog.cryptovoxels.com>.

Here, you can build your own public virtual 3d world, and today I'd like to explore one in particular.

Sadplanet Virtual

JOHN

After that i researched blockchain technology and became enthralled in space and pretty much have observed most of those changes and growth. Currently i am very involved with the majority of the crypto art space and have some history pertaining to progression of key events. I was lucky enough to be one of the first artists among a global but small telegram group that experimented with art on the blockchain via rarepepe card trading, basically meme trading on the blockchain. I currently have more recent works on emerging art galleries.

SHIPPING
ON DISC DRIVE

I: What inspired you to create your vaporwave lounge Sadplanet Virtual?

R: I've been involved in the Vaporwave online community since late 2015 and run the "Vaporwave Sadplanet" telegram room as well. I was inspired to create this "Virtual Plaza" of sorts due to the fact that it became such a notable term in the community that i felt i was compelled to at least make one if i had the ability and know how. Fortunately with the advent of blockchain vr world "Cryptovoxels" and being able to actually own your own land i was able to make this dream a reality.

I: What sort of art and media comprises the space?



R: Mostly the art comes from the crypto art community, yet some are pulled from other various sources online. As far as music i put some notable and key artists in there and some "proto" vaporwave artists. By "proto" i just mean artists from the '80s that have been sampled quite a bit by vaporwave artists. I also have some nostalgic '90s movie clips in there scattered, some blade runner, black rain and point break.

I: What is your connection to vaporwave? What does it mean to you?

My personal connection to vaporwave is actually a life saving one, artistically speaking. At the time i was so frustrated with music and almost gave up producing and then the aesthetic gods appeared. It made me enjoy music again but in a different context, one where i was more so enjoying a visual art movement with a "soundtrack" rather than the other way around.

When someone asks me "what is vaporwave?"

usually tell them it's the only genre of art that has music as its backbone and soundtrack. A lot of vaporwave musicians might be offended but i do not downplay their music at all. It's just the very first time (for me at least) where an art form became such a prominent attribute to a music form that it sometimes eclipses it.

I: Why did you use CryptoVoxels to create this space?

R: why did you use cryptovoxels to create this space?

R: As far as sadplanet virtual is concerned, i made it sort of a heavenly kickback where people could warp in and just hang out, enjoy the virtual vibes and listen to music while reading random things around the place. I also have welcoming gifts as well, for instance my book "memphis megahertz and the kansas city fractal" is located somewhere in there via pdf link.

I: how did you come across cryptovoxels?

R: There's a marketplace called opensea where a lot of ethereum blockchain digital collectables, games, art galleries are traded. It lists a lot of projects that are also in the space and sometimes you tend to check other things out. I stumbled upon cryptovoxels through there and luckily got on ground floor. The virtual city is pretty huge now!

There are three prominent virtual ethereum worlds; cryptovoxels, decentraland and somnium space. Although i used cryptovoxels first i have tried all three. Cryptovoxels, with its very blockish style and presentation felt very aesthetic and right from the first attempt. Also a great feature is being able to send the coordinates via web link and anybody can just jump in. You don't need to know how to use blockchain to move around which is great for newcomers.

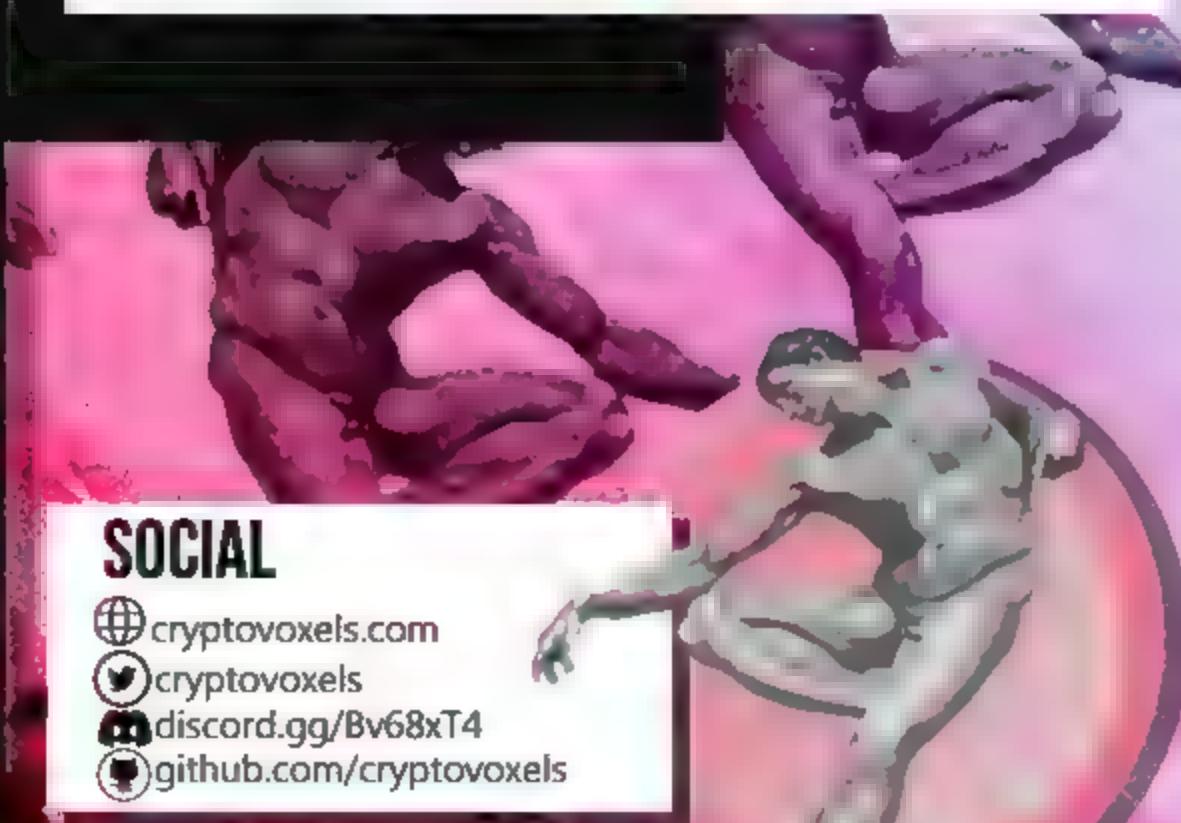
I: How people can submit stuff to sadplanet virtual, and what is the best way to contact you. Can people rent space here?

R: As far as submitting material i am always open to putting artist's tracks in the room for a debut. I usually grab the album art and stick the player right underneath it in world. They can reach me on my twitter handle @

robnessofficial. I'll be more than happy to help. As far as buying land, first you need ethereum and you can check land prices on the <https://opensea.io> cryptovoxels market.

I've been focusing a lot on my crypto art career but the room is always available for any of my aesthetic family use. Please do not hesitate to contact if you want to host the space for your music debuts or art as well. Just hit me up!

The construction of the plot is dictated by the current tools that cryptovoxels allows you to use. Ben nolan (creator) and his team are always updating so new features emerge all of the time. The crypto art scene is really



prominent in the world at the moment as well as making rare “wearables” for your characters and so forth. I have a couple of build shots from when i began.

Luckily i had a bunch of ethereum during the time of build so purchasing was easy. At the time it cost me 70 bucks or so, now i have gotten bids for around 500 and up... but i'll never sell! It's the very first vaporwave plaza of all time, no way in hell i'm selling. Too sentimental lol.

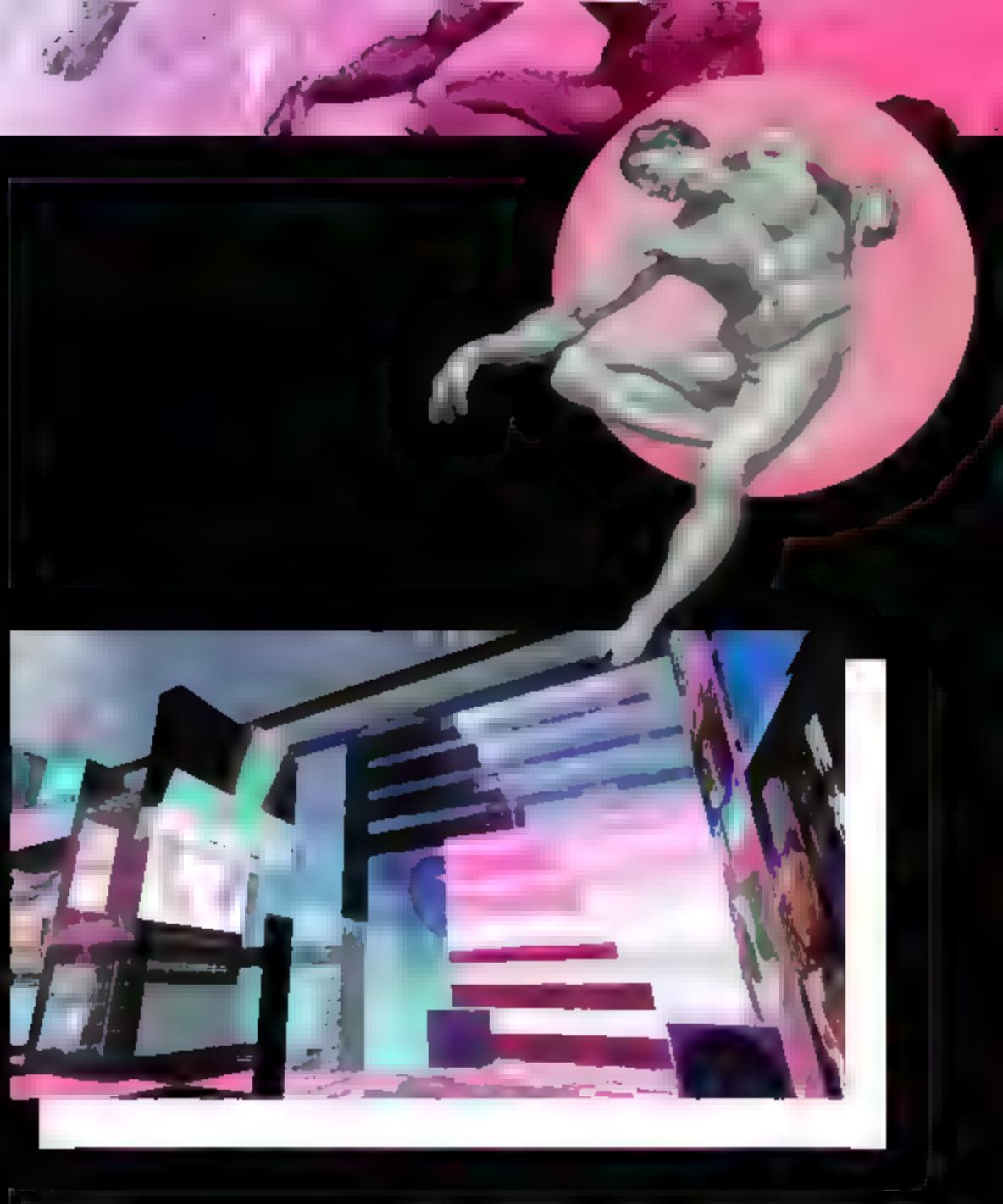
As far as the tokens that attribute your rights to the vir-



tual land, that always stays on the ethereum network. I do not know how indestructible the cryptovoxels world is since it lives on top of it via web3. This perhaps is a question for ben nolan and his team in the future.

I: thanks so much for your time, robness. Looking forward to what you come up with in the future.

Since Cryptovoxels supports V.R. I decided to record a little session of my experience. Join me as i explore the sadplanet virtual lounge in vr - find the video on the private suite YouTube page.



If you'd like to check out Sadplanet Virtual for yourself, here are the coordinates (just click PLAY, then paste the coordinates beside the equals sign in the link)

[https://cryptovoxels.com/play?coords=](https://cryptovoxels.com/play?coords=W@353W,2U,312S)

**ADD COORDINATES AFTER THE EQUAL SIGN
W@353W,2U,312S**

[https://cryptovoxels.com/play?coords=](https://cryptovoxels.com/play?coords=W@353W,2U,312S)



TWITTER.COM/ROBNESSOFFICIAL

Vapor-wares: Episode 1: The Phantom Vapor

The presentation of a cassette or record can go a long way to enhancing the aesthetics of the vaporwave listening experience. So in the first installment of this new series, we'll review some of the most beautiful physical releases across the genre in the past few months. In the four releases we've highlighted here, we're treated to a true cornucopia of visual and physical delights sure to please any collector.

Welcome to vapor-wares.

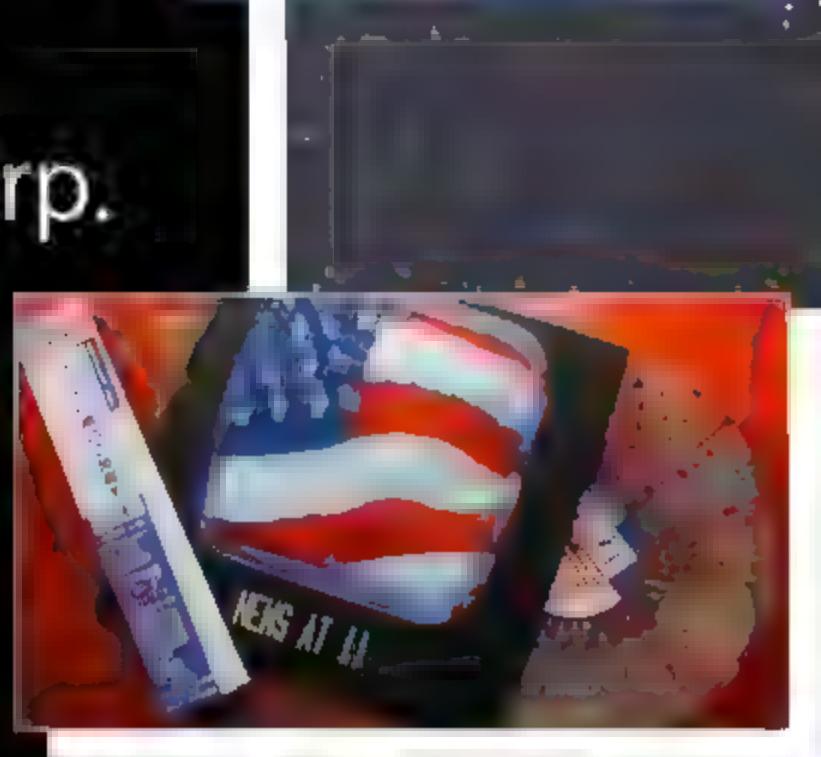
我在這裡 by 夢想的頻道

One of the more recent trends in vaporwave cassette design is the use of full-body cassette-shell printing. And one of the nicest examples of this trend is *我在這裡*. The cassette itself feels like an extension of the j-card; the artwork on the tape is a perfect supplement to the j-card, functioning as both a beautiful showpiece in its own right and a marvelous accompaniment to the entire package. The result is a lush, overwhelmingly wondrous dream in blue. Anyone who happens to have it in their collection is truly lucky. —gbanas92



News at 11 by 猫シ Corp.

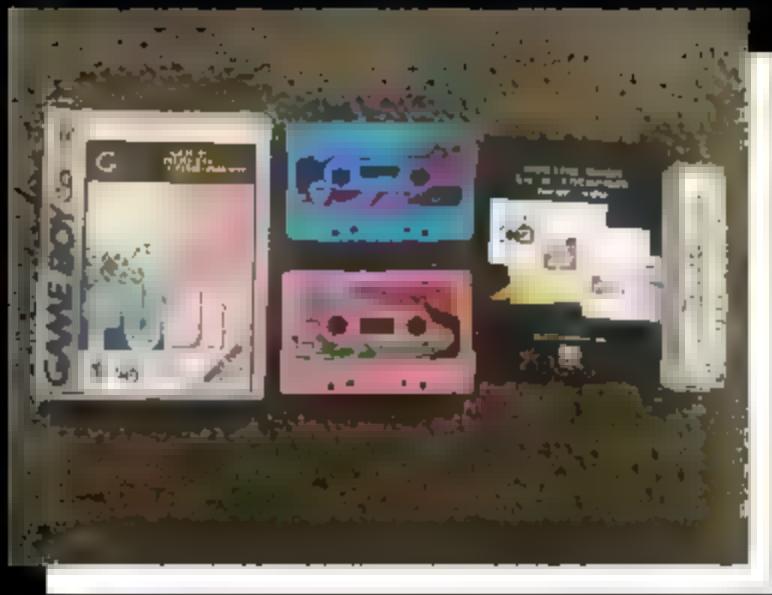
A vaporwave classic in its own right, 猫シ Corp.'s homage to one of the most terrifying days in America's history recently made its stunning vinyl debut through Geometric Lullaby — and as those familiar with the label would expect, this also meant a killer accompanying obi strip. Pairing the strip with the album art and the unbelievably perfect red and blue splatter vinyl, the uniform "stars and stripes" design woven through all facets of this release makes it quite the looker. This obi strip slots into the design of the album so perfectly, in fact, that it's even included in the digital album art on the Geometric Lullaby Bandcamp page. —gbanas92



Vaper-wares: Episode 1: The Phantom Vaper

Euphoria/Cherry Dream Machine box set by FUJII

Once in a blue moon, an artist with a particularly devout following gets blessed with an ultra-collectible box set. Not only does this present fans with the opportunity to grab an entire discography or series at once, it also allows labels to express their creativity through its presentation. In the case of FUJII, Gulf Audio Company came up with the perfect packaging to embody the artist's retro synth sound. Artwork for albums Euphoria and Cherry Dream Machine, combined with Gulf's updated logo, seem to belong naturally alongside the classic Nintendo and Game Boy Color iconography on the cover. Meanwhile, the back of the case features a small tribute to fans: a listener-submitted comment from each album's Bandcamp page. The case comes wrapped in a horizontal obi strip that pays homage to the Japanese inspiration of FUJII's name and aesthetic, and the tapes inside feature new pixel artwork, as well as matte neon shells that mimic the look and feel of a Game Boy's plastic exterior. -DJ Nonn



One of the most impressive ambient albums of 2019, Tomorrow, 2096 saw an equally impressive physical release: three vinyl variants, a cassette, and even a MiniDisk. The text on the obi strip crawls down the side of the case as if it were scrolling across an LED matrix. Each of the vinyls features unique coloration — and so does the cassette, making the choice that much more agonizing. If you choose the cassette, your ticket to the future is a translucent purple artifact that feels as advanced as it is archaic. Meanwhile, the vinyl selection offers a smoky blue "nebula," pink and purple "dreamburst," or a white and pink splattered purple "citylight" edition, each equally exquisite in their presentation. Finally, for the truest cyberpunk feel, the MiniDisk features full front-printed artwork, leaving the back of the disk transparently exposed, all part of a package that fits in your palm. -DJ Nonn

Tomorrow, 2096 by



END
E22



Visual Artists of

vaporwave

"Is this vaporwave?"

If you've ever perused the online vaporwave art communities such as r/vaporwaveart, more than likely you've seen this question posed along with a posted image. Despite the variety of hits and misses with these posts, one thing is for certain - the genre is very much like its musical counterpart: a wide mix of elements, techniques, references, and influences. Today, it's far beyond what you'll find skimming any 2015 article overgeneralizing it as dolphins and statues clashing against logos, oozing with irony and iced tea cans.

In this special feature I've reached out and invited a range of visual artists from across the community to have their work showcased, give a bit about themselves, and share what inspires them. Collectively, they display just how robust the visual lexicon of vaporwave's aesthetic has become. Some you might recognize, others maybe not – but I do sincerely hope you enjoy the collection, and if so, give them a follow!

Seth Startix
CURATOR



M A R I A H B I R S A K

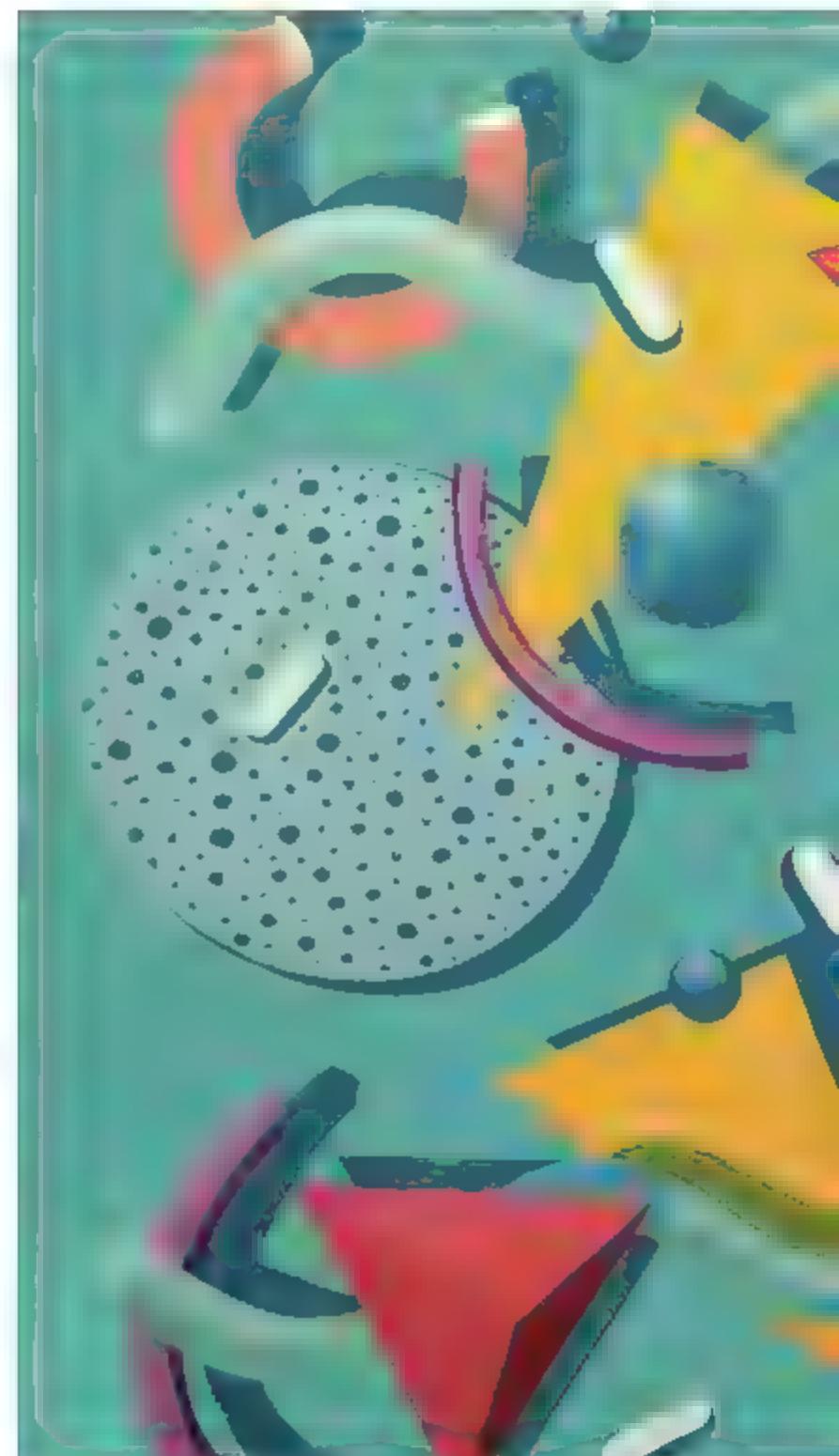
ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Mariah Birsak is an illustrator and artist from Amsterdam, The Netherlands. As a freelancer she provides services between the fields of art, illustration and graphic design. With her acrylic paintings she transports people to a happy and nostalgic place using vibrant colors, geometric shapes and light and shadows.

INSPIRATION:

Her work is inspired by 80's design, Memphis Milano, surrealism and places of "The Dream."

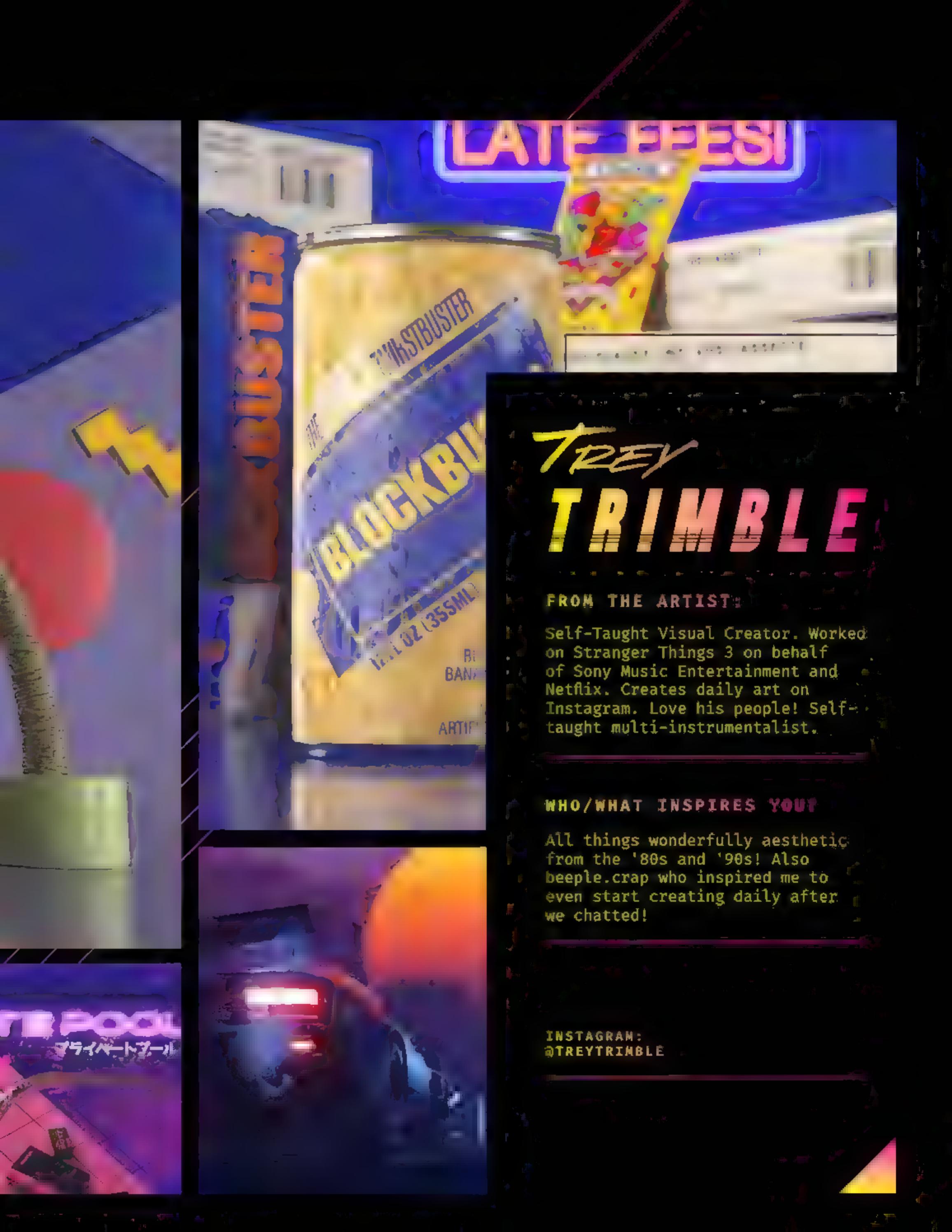
INSTAGRAM:
@ARTWITHMARIAH





マクドナルド





LATE FEST

BLOCKBUSTER



TREY TRIMBLE

FROM THE ARTIST:

Self-Taught Visual Creator. Worked on Stranger Things 3 on behalf of Sony Music Entertainment and Netflix. Creates daily art on Instagram. Love his people! Self-taught multi-instrumentalist.

WHO/WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

All things wonderfully aesthetic from the '80s and '90s! Also beopple.crap who inspired me to even start creating daily after we chatted!

INSTAGRAM:
[@TREYTRIMBLE](https://www.instagram.com/treytrimble)

INTERVIEW

FROM THE ARTIST:

My name is Luis, I live in Austin, Tx.

These illustrations are made entirely on Adobe Illustrator. The main "objective" is almost always attempting to illustrate the visions I see whenever I get high, close my eyes, and get lost in the music, especially in the heavy hypnagogic corners of vaporwave like *telepath*, *猫シ Corp.*, *18 Carat Affair*, etc.

WHO/WHAT IS YOUR MOST PROMINENT SOURCE OF INSPIRATION?

Mostly vaporwave for this particular style.

TWITTER:
@LUNITASDREAMS

INSTAGRAM:
@LUNITAS







designsince86

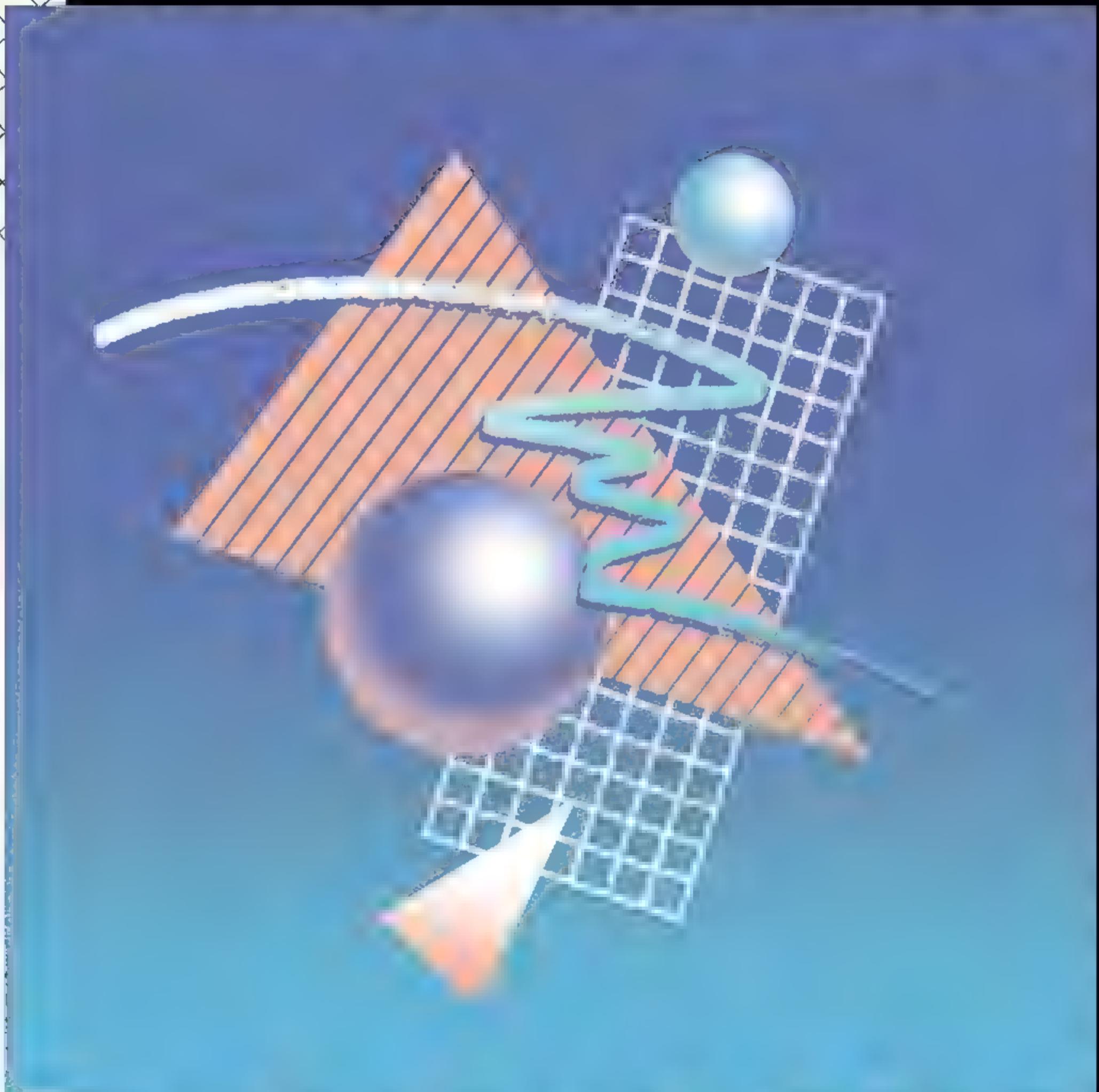
*Miami meets Memphis
with a touch of
modern flair*

**Who/what is your most prominent source
of inspiration?**

Old record covers, vaporwave and
synthwave music, Memphis Milano design.

**Where can readers see more
of your work?**

instagram: @designsince86



WARAKAMI

FROM THE ARTIST:

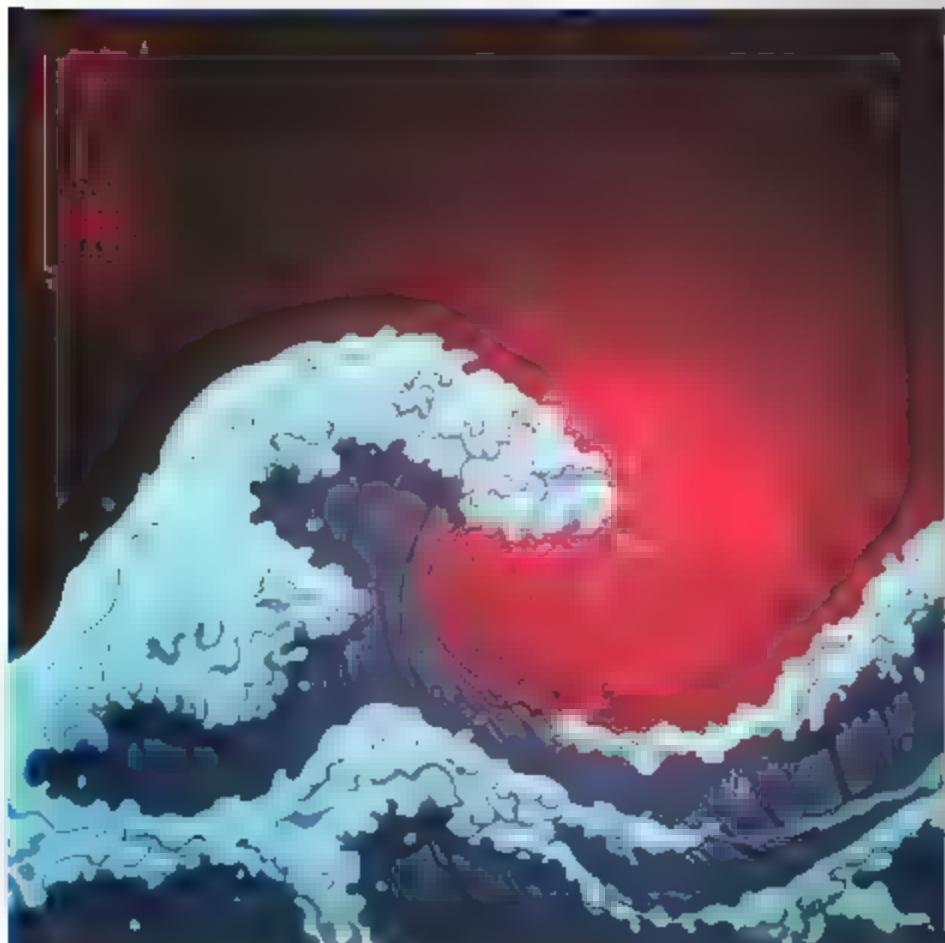
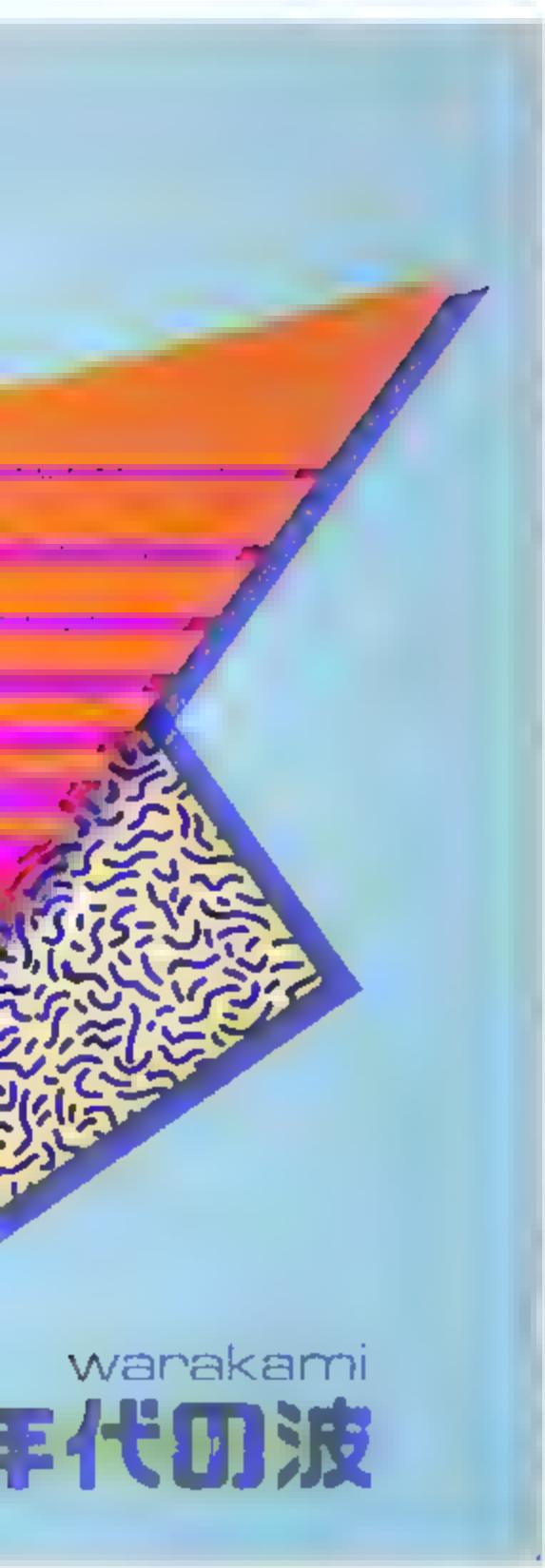
I still feel like I'm pretty new to all of this, but so far I've had a ton of fun discovering what types of vaporwave (and vaporwave-tangential) art I like making the most.

WHO/WHAT IS YOUR MOST PROMINENT SOURCE OF INSPIRATION?

I follow a lot of vaporwave artists and blogs, there are so many good ones that inspiration isn't hard to find. Past that, I do have a lot of fun pulling in elements from blank VHS tape cover art, Memphis Group art and traditional Japanese paintings.

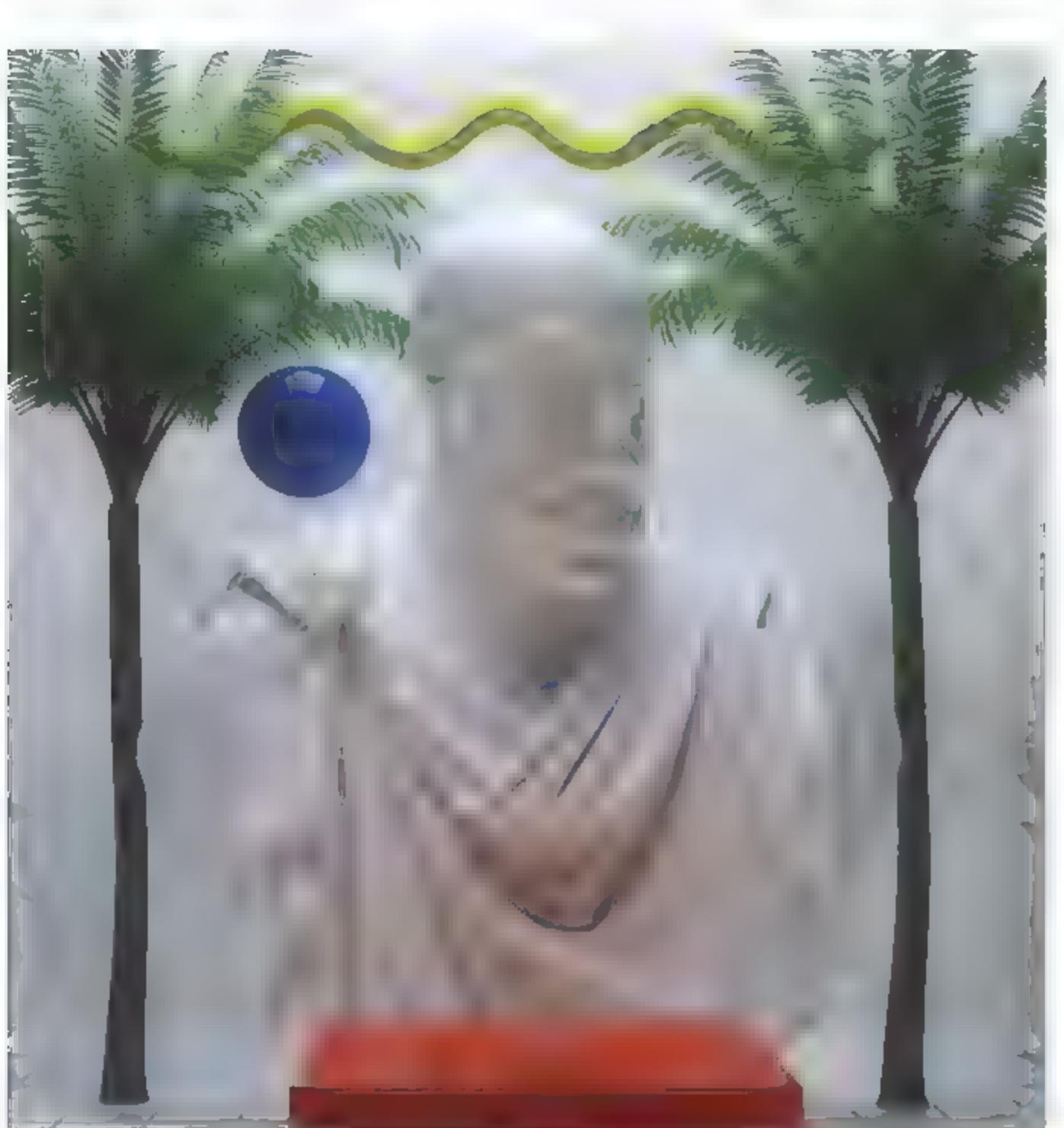
[INSTAGRAM.COM/WARAKAMI_VAPORWAVE](https://www.instagram.com/warakami_vaporwave)







NEON GOLD



FROM THE ARTIST:

Hi, I'm Neon Gold. Let your imagination explore the worlds I've created.

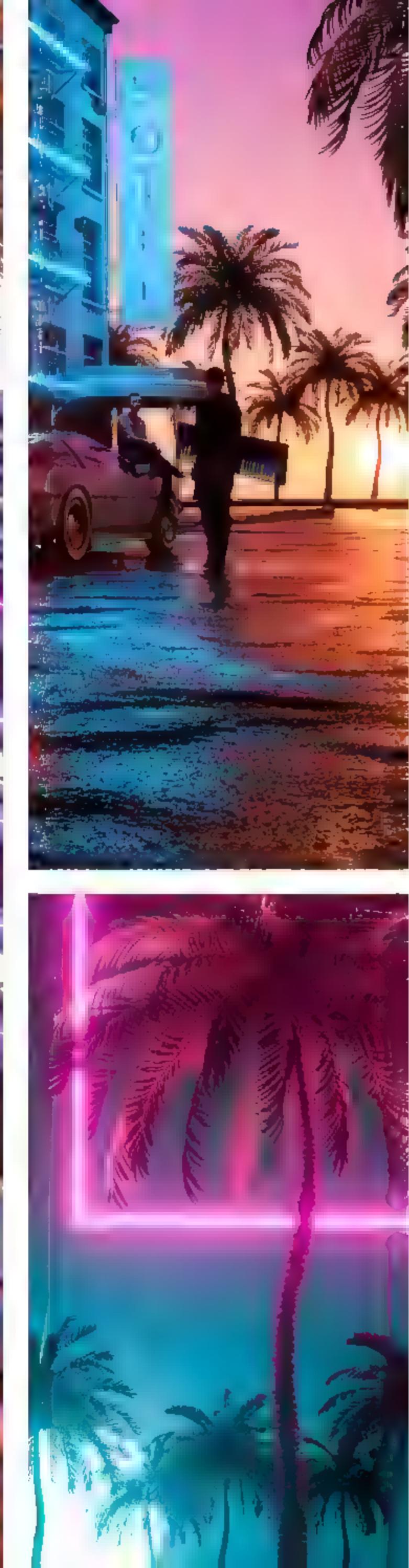
WHO/WHAT INSPIRES YOUR WORK?

I have many influences: Francis Bacon, Greek mythology, Stephen King, Jean-Luc-Godard, The Legend of Zelda series, music, video games, technology, movies, H.P. Lovecraft, Charles Bukowski.

INSTAGRAM:
[@NEONGOLD_](https://www.instagram.com/neongold_)







MALDO_95

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Cristóbal Maldonado (aka. maldo_95) is a 25-year-old, self-taught 3D artist. Exposed at an early age to cult-classic movies, video games, and music by his two elder brothers, he always felt captivated and inspired to create content based on many genres such as science fiction, anachronism, and retrofuturism. As a self-proclaimed daydreamer, constantly imagining different universes, he initially started by drawing his ideas with pen and paper, while briefly experimenting with music during his school years.

In 2017, while studying to be a dentist, he finally found in his free time that the right place to focus his creativity was the world of 3D art. After experimenting with software such as Cinema 4D and Blender 3D, it became apparent that these platforms were the best way to make his ideas a

reality. As such, he began learning the different techniques that would allow these ideas to come to fruition by himself and with the help of the Internet.

Eventually, in 2018, he started posting artworks on Instagram which were heavily inspired by genres such as vaporwave, outrun, and cyberpunk to name a few. With each artwork iteration, a personal style started to manifest, consisting of the use of palm trees, neon lights, and objects or characters placed in settings that didn't correspond to their timelines, making these elements a staple of Maldo_95's work.

WHAT IS YOUR SOURCE FOR INSPIRATION?

Retrofuturism and anachronism

INSTAGRAM:
@MALDO_95



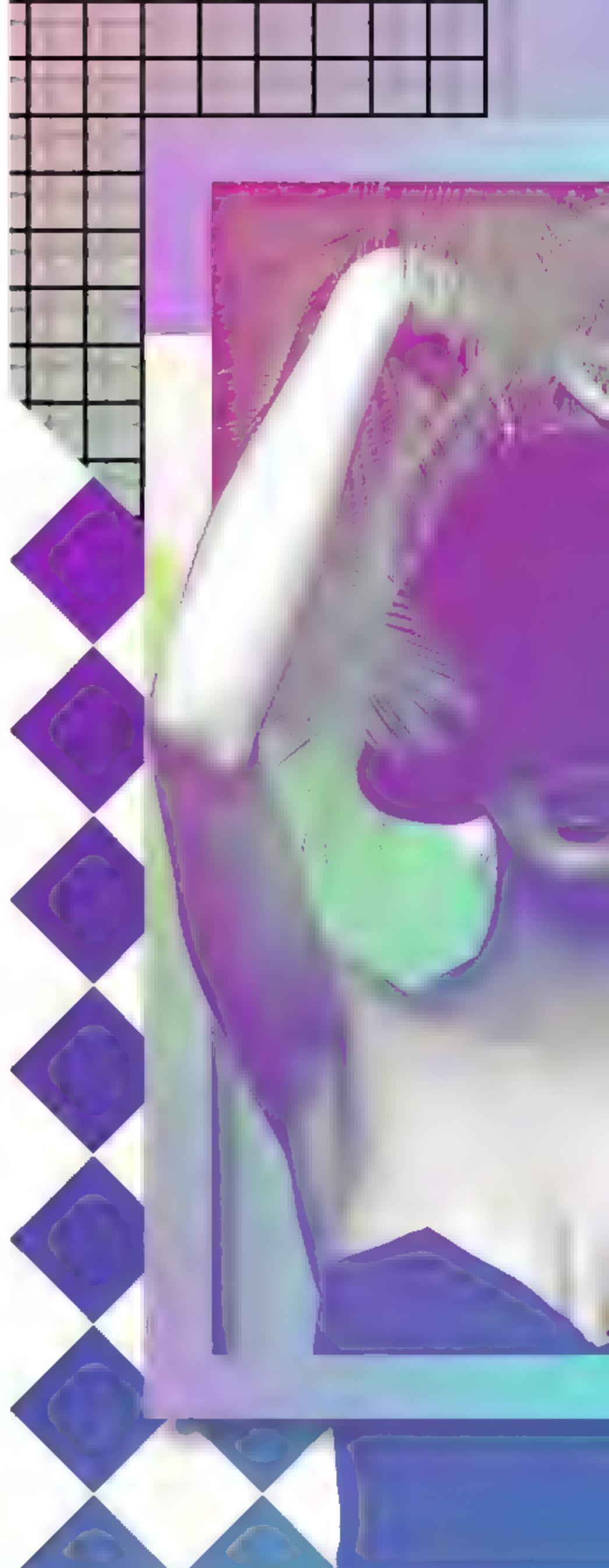
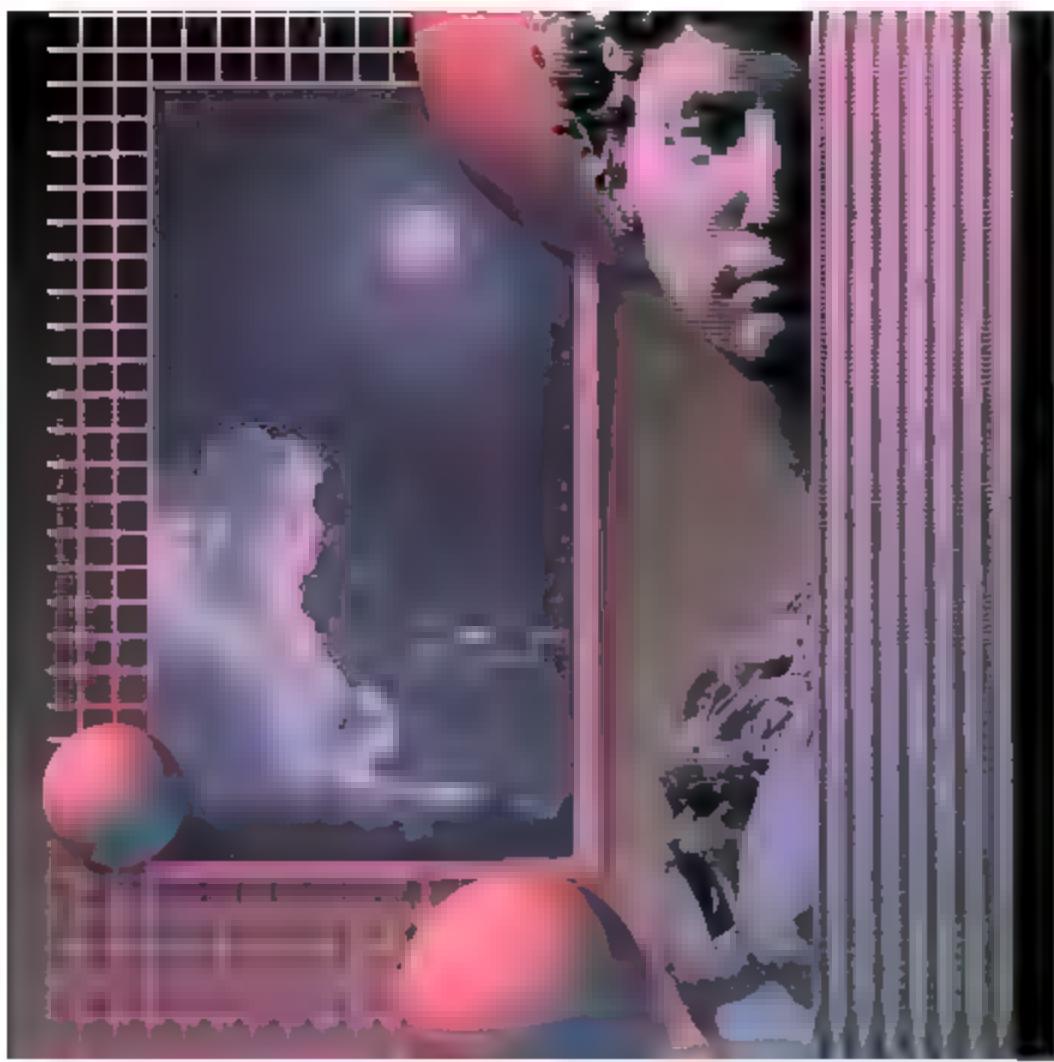
DATAGIRL

About the Artist:

DATAGIRL's influences as a graphic artist are largely rooted in her favorite childhood video games as well as Y2K pop culture. She explores various themes within her personal artwork including identity, love, nature/environment, and fantasy. DATAGIRL is fond of saturated, cheerful colors and frequently implements them in her work.

TWITTER:
@IMDATAGIRL





sheep

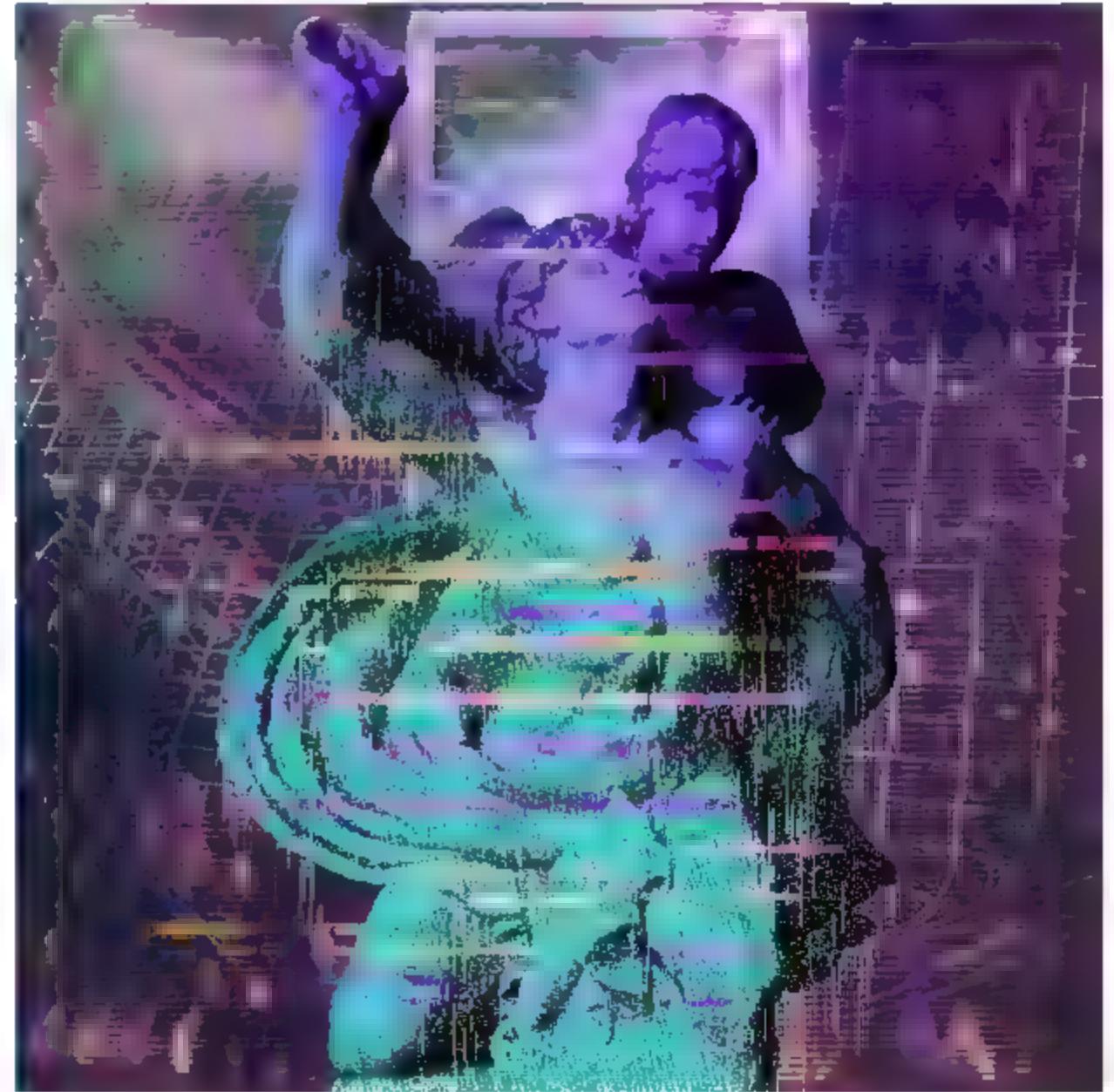
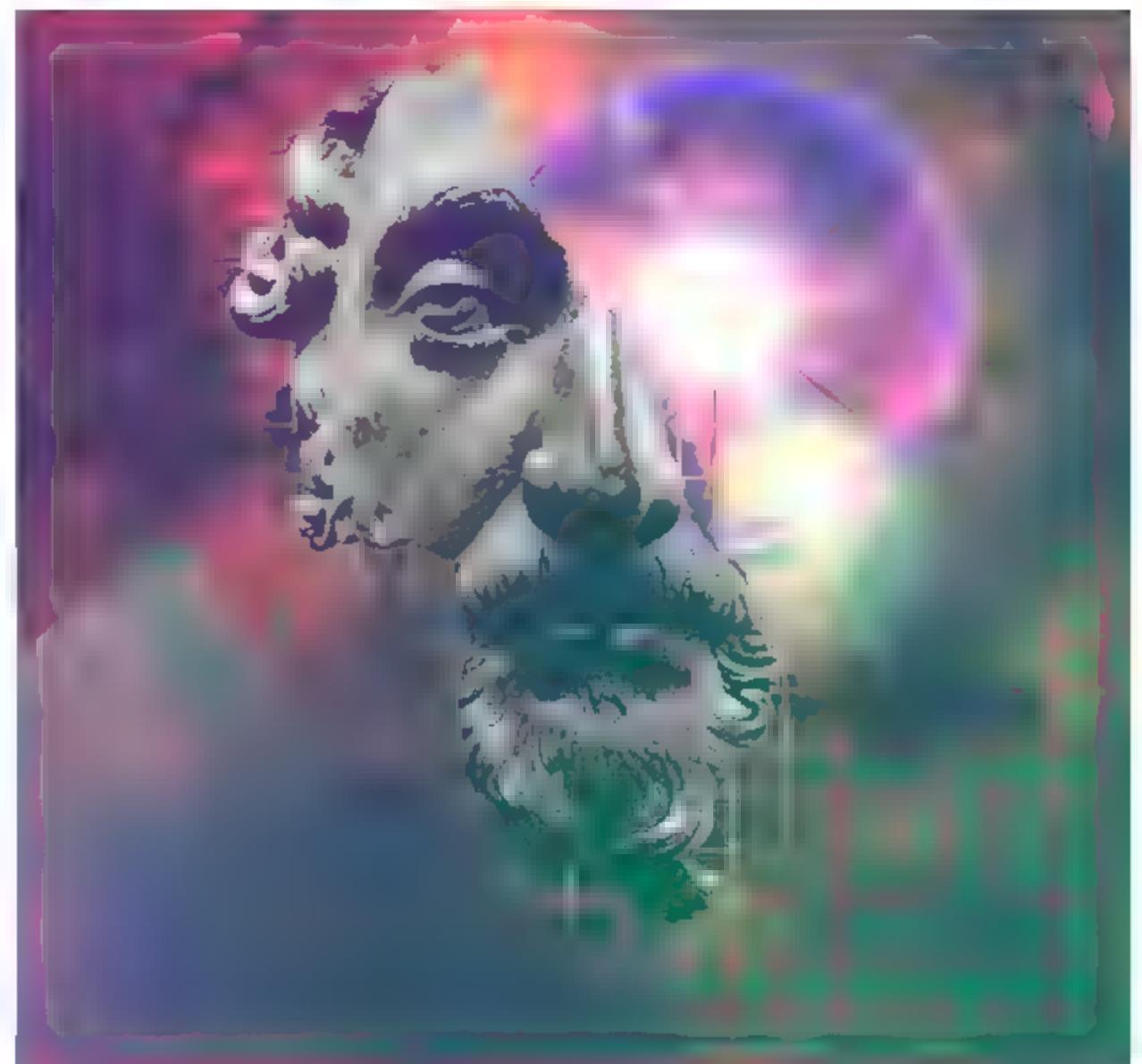
FROM THE ARTIST:

I just like to experiment and make stuff look cool. That's what this is all about, right?

WHAT IS YOUR SOURCE FOR INSPIRATION?

I get a lot of inspiration from collage style pieces and the artists behind them.

INSTAGRAM:
@SHEEPTYTURTLE



AND ALL THAT

illustrations by:
VAPERROR & VAPORPRIESTESS

If you're not familiar with the term "Solo Jazz", you've probably been living under a rock for a good minute. However, not knowing the name doesn't mean you're not familiar with the iconic design that has retroactively been celebrated as a staple of the '90s, as well as an essential totem to the entire vaporwave experience. The current vaporwave aficionado can recognize it from a mile away as it blazes a teal and purple zig-zag across the genre's event horizon before it's ultimately sucked into the nostalgic hodgepodge known as vaporwave aesthetic.

From nail art to car wraps and even the carpet of the Portland airport, the design has been featured all over nostalgia blogs, some of which are digital shrines to the design. Oliver Tree utilized it in his 2018 music video "All That x Alien Boy" which caused the Solo company to reach out, prohibiting him from appropriating it for use in any future work. But hey, who doesn't want to see a Jazz-laden monster truck crush a tiny sedan (...besides Solo)?

Introduced in the '90s, the iconic, endearingly messy design made its

first appearance on disposable cups and dishware produced by a handful of companies - Imperial Bondware, Sweetheart and Solo. History shows us that canonically the design belongs to Solo, hence the title "Solo Jazz", but while we are quite familiar with the revered design, what's not quite so clear is exactly who initially designed it.

If you didn't have the extreme pleasure of growing up in the '90s, it's quite likely that your first time experiencing the seminal design was seeing it as FuckJerry's profile picture, plastered across social media and rebranded with their title on such merch as baseball caps and even t-shirts. This might even have led you to believe that this clutch design belonged to the company. Let's see what we can find out about what really happened...

Who made "Jazz"? If you've wondered this, you're not alone. In fact, in 2015, Redditors took it upon themselves to do a bit of armchair detective work of their own in an effort to find out where the design originated. They wanted to know what inspired it, why the title Jazz was given and what it meant, and

furthermore, how much monetary gain resulted from the design. After all, for the artist, it had to be an amazing feeling seeing the design, once merely part of the background of any given mass gathering, now becoming the focus and inspiration of so many new works of art.

The answer isn't so simple. At the peak of the thread's popularity, two names came forth: Gina Ekiss and Stephanie Miller. Both designers claim ownership of the design, though neither were really able to provide definitive proof. Part of what contributed to the confusion around the design's origins is the fact that the design has been utilized by a few different companies during its production cycle, with Solo cup becoming a frontrunner, allegedly issuing cease and desist orders on smaller companies using the design. The cannibalization of the different cup companies in part lead to the confusion of the design's origins - after all, Sweetheart was eventually bought by Solo, Imperial Bondware by International Paper.

The origins share a common thread: a cup company wanted a new design and tasked its designers with coming up with new ideas in the form of a company competition. Ekiss' narrative places her with Sweetheart Cup; Miller's, with Imperial Bondware.

Ekiss explains the origins of the design as a reinterpretation of one she made in college, "Razzi." The design was originally made on vellum with charcoal, and, when reinterpreted, was scanned into a computer, allowing her to experiment with it in different ways until she was able to settle on a design she felt worthy of her company's competition. Of the handful of designs she submitted, the then nameless piece was chosen as the winner. When she was informed, Ekiss was asked to pick a name, and came up with "Jazz". That's it: there's no hidden meaning to look for.

Miller's account of the design is quite similar. While working for Imperial Bondware, she too was tasked with healthy competition in effort to design a new stock cup for her company. "The inspiration for it came from torn paper of different colors layered on top of one another...something in design I was seeing at the time. I knew I couldn't achieve that on a cup and that's when I decided to try painting with paintbrushes and getting that overlapping effect.

"We were working on designing a new stock cup, used as a generic cup that people can buy instead of paying for a custom design...this particular [design] was ultimately picked because I envisioned that companies could have it printed in their own custom colors and at a lower price than a full custom design."

The story of Jazz becomes more complicated and less clear at this point, as conflicting stories emerge about who appropriated the work from whom. In the thread from Reddit, Miller suggests

that someone from Solo saw her Imperial design (at the time, rejected as Imperial thought it was too 'forward thinking'), and asked Ekiss to reinterpret it in a manner that skirted trademarks and copyrights, expressing dissatisfaction at how similar the design was to her original, even in color choice. At the same time, Ekiss claims the design is all her own, and that it utilized the colors she loved most. The truth is that not even Solo knows who to credit for the design. A spokesperson for Solo, Kasey Skala said of the design, "at this time, our best assumption is that a former employee named Gina created the design, but we are unable to confirm whether this is accurate or not." Imperial was unable to find proofs of the design in their archives, Miller stating that while she had once had sleeves with her design, they were lost after multiple relocations.

We're all familiar with the appropriative nature of vaporwave; after all, by its very definition, vaporwave is reworking established pieces of art into transformed, parallel universe versions of themselves. Designers who walk among us are no stranger to their own works being yoinked and reposted or, worse, resold on sites without so much as a hint of credit. Unfortunately, this seems to be something that most designers will experience in their profession: a client who wants you to make someone else's art. The client, abdicating any responsibility for the ethics of the situation, foists upon the designer the moral dilemma of ganking someone else's work.

Miller has some advice for the aspiring designer who fears this exact situation happening to them, however. "Don't lose anything in a move, and document, document, document."

So, did either designer make money off the design? Sadly, no. In the design industry, work you do for your employer essentially belongs to them: no bonuses, no royalties. Zilch. Nada. In Ekiss' case, she wasn't even aware that the design had been chosen until after she was asked to name it.

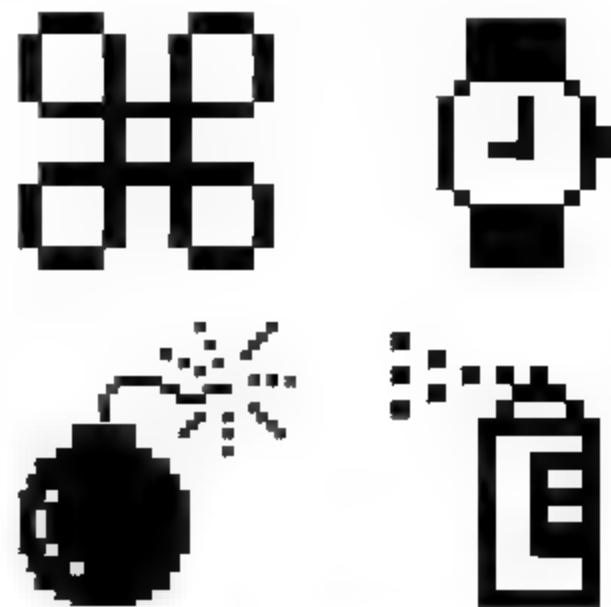
Of the design's newfound cult following, Ekiss says she was "shocked, to say the least." Miller said she had "no idea it would get the crazy cult following that it has now. But I think it's awesome!" Miller had no idea what vaporwave was, but expressed that she enjoys seeing people in the community celebrating the design. "I get sent photos from friends all the time about some of the weird things people print this design on...painting cars and such. The fact that it's something iconic makes me feel like I've left something somewhat important behind (even if it's also filling landfills!)...and isn't that what artists want in the end? I would never have guessed, when I was designing this, that people would be wearing it someday!"

So while we can't say with any certainty who originally made the design we can't seem to live without, we can at least revel in its sheer existence. From all the pizza parties to the endlessly refilled soda cups of our youth, Jazz will live on, not only on fancy nail art posts and in memes, but in the vaporsphere as well.

One thing we can say for certain is that FuckJerry (as with much of their other content) didn't make it. And really, that's all that matters, right?

Iconic: Susan Kare

WRITER: [cerulea_d.lux](#)



Graphic designers rarely attain the sort of notoriety that follows others in tech — when people talk about the vintage computer graphics that frequently inspire vaporwave artists, names like Jobs and Gates inevitably float to the top. But even if you've never heard her name, you know Susan Kare's work. The trash can, error bomb, smiling computer, and the immortal and ubiquitous save icon were all designed by a young woman in 1983 for one of the earliest graphical user interfaces that brought computing out of government labs and into the home. But her work for Apple is only one chapter in a long and far-reaching saga. Kare's approach to design — one which focuses on simple, clearly conveyed ideas — has earned her national awards, a storied career, and a place in the Museum of Modern Art, where her original sketchbooks now reside.

Kare worked at a museum in San Francisco in the early '80s, after moving to the city with a PhD in fine art and being "rejected by all" the design firms and advertising agencies in Palo Alto and San Francisco, as well as greeting card company Hallmark. Andy Hertzfeld, of the original Macintosh

development team, suggested that Kare obtain a gridded notebook and "whip up" some example graphics and fonts to present to Apple. She was hired almost immediately, and went on to create the core icon suite that continues to influence UX and design today, as well as 7 fonts — including the Chicago system font, which endured through decades of technological advancement and graced the first iPods. Kare's work on Mac Paint gave the world ideograms that are globally recognized: the paint bucket, pencil, lasso, spray paint, eraser, and hand tools. Her beloved suite of wingdings has been preserved and made compatible for modern systems, living on as the Cairo font.

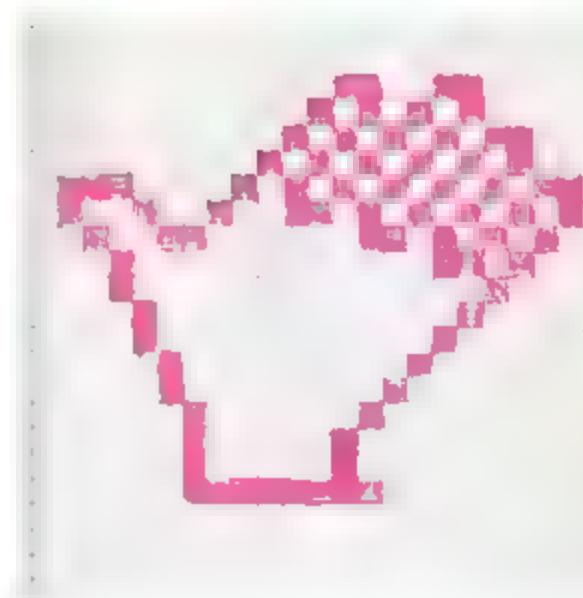
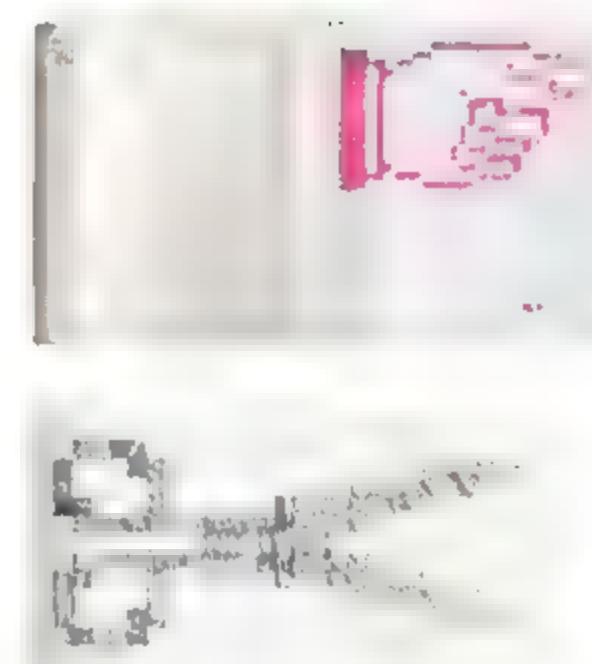
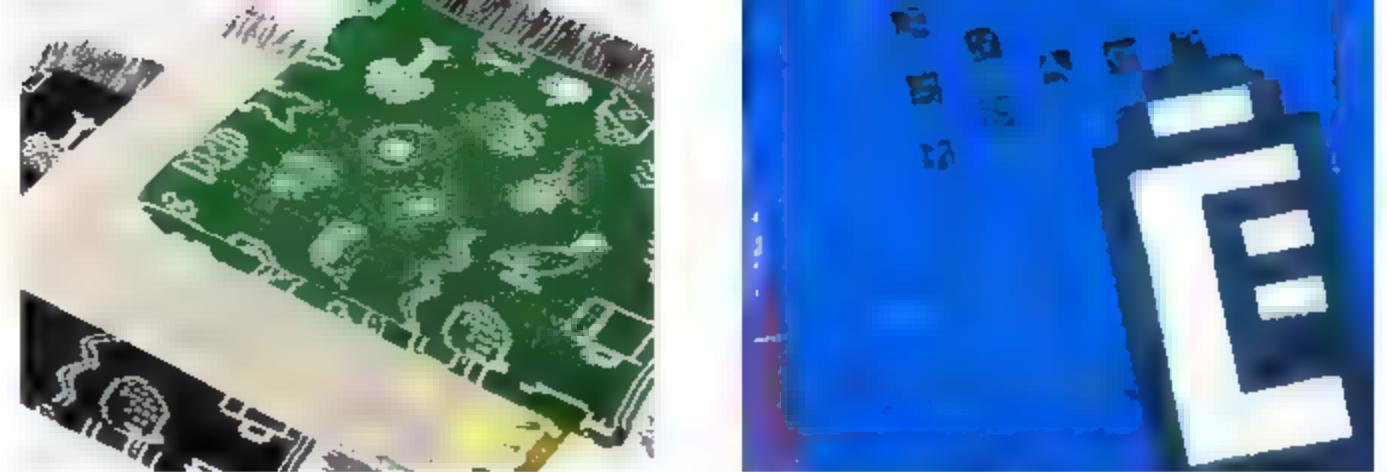
Her inspirations for pixel art include needlepoint and mosaic, hieroglyphs and other ancient pictographs. "People have certainly been communicating with little pictures for a while, and making up bigger images out of smaller pieces... these are such good analogues to bitmap design. People tell stories with symbols." In an era of daily system updates and relentless re-branding, Kare's work stands out because it prioritizes minimalism and wide understanding, not tied to any language.

Her use of symbols not only tell their own stories, but opened the door for everyone to tell their own, through the use and understanding of the powerful tools that lie behind the familiar, friendly icons that have remained largely unchanged for decades.

After Apple, Kare had a hand in the transition from command-line interfaces into the “desktops” we know today. She provided Microsoft with the icon set that remained largely unchanged through Windows XP. The first iteration of Windows Solitaire was included in Windows 3.0 in 1990, with the express purpose of teaching the world how to use a computer mouse. The intricate, familiar card art encouraged those accustomed to typing neon letters into a black void to drag, drop, and click – making a smooth transition to true GUIs with only 16 colors. “Visual complexity is not necessarily directly proportional to effectiveness,” she says. “Key to the creative process is still the fundamental effort to present a functional image which works well as a symbol for its intended audience.”

Kare established her own design firm in the ‘90s, and her portfolio is nothing short of stunning. Her ethos of understanding the limitations of computer displays and efficient brand messaging, and considering those limitations as assets while focusing on simplicity and universal understanding, led to work with many of the Internet 2.0 vanguard such as Facebook (where her “digital gifts” icons raked in almost \$40 million), PayPal, and countless tech-bubble products and companies, most of which Kare’s work has outlived, and resides only in archived corners of the internet or her own website.

Today, the mother of icons is Pinterest’s Creative Director of Special Projects, and in addition to offering signed prints directly from her website (www.kare.com), she partners with Areaware to bring her Bitmap



Textiles in various forms to adorn your home – even a physical deck of her famous solitaire cards. Computing and vaporwave enthusiasts alike continue to mine her early work for inspiration, and Kare’s incredible design sense is inextricably woven into the fabric of our aesthetic. Yuliya Veligurskaya, of vaporwave staple Studio Cult, has even brought many Kare-inspired designs to life, including the Recycle Bin, original Mac control panel, and others. “Icon design is like solving a puzzle,” she has explained, “trying to marry an image and idea that... will be easy for people to understand and remember.” Solving the challenges of the Information Age with the enduring hieroglyphs of the modern day, Kare has not only ensured her immortality in the commercial digital sphere, but also secured a place in the pantheon of vaporwave progenitors.

NOBODY HERE



Written by: InternetHolly

Faccording to the radio station, the Vipers weren't human, at least, not anymore. Paper white skin stretched over bony limbs, with a languid, lumbering gait, sharp talons and a predator's instinct. They'd been human before the bombs went off, before the chemicals scrambled their DNA and drove them insane with bloodlust and anger. The staticky voice of the station leader always said the same thing every evening to any potential survivors that were tuned in: get inside by sunset. Lock the doors, close the curtains, keep quiet. They only hunt at night. At least for now.

I'd been spending my time moving around from place to place. I'd picked up some food and clothing from K-Mart and had taken to spending my time ducking in and out of the residential homes in one of the wealthy neighborhoods.

In the heart of town, I knew there were other people, survivors like me, that were doing the same thing. I'd seen their remnants at the houses I ransacked: scattered blankets and packages of food crumpled and haphazardly strewn about. One house even had an entire map of Grove Heights drawn in red lipstick across one of the dining room walls. But still, I hadn't encountered another living person.

Well, okay. I mean, that's kind of a lie. I'd been part of a survivor's camp at one point. Shortly after the blast, I'd found a half dozen other college kids huddled in the public library's computer lab, frantically attempting to email and instant message themselves some help from the outside world. They spent two full days attached to those computers, clinging to the dial up signal as if it was their

very lifeline before a few stray Vipers made their way into the library. I'd barely managed to escape.

That was two weeks ago. It's been two weeks since I've seen a single living human being.

The neighborhood I was staying in had seen better days. It'd been one of those elite, top-tier gated communities you saw in TV movies and in brochures: Houses you knew you'd never be able to afford, but that were still cool to look at, not quite Robin Leech-caliber, but still way outta my price range. Now, they were nothing but empty shells set atop sprawling wastelands of weeds and overgrown brush. They weren't very nice to look at aesthetically, but they were all relatively intact and whenever the occupants vacated (I couldn't let myself

There's nobody here. There's nobody here. There's nobody here.

I believe that they'd been killed or turned, nope, wouldn't do it), they'd left most of their nice stuff, so yeah, I figured this was as good as any place to camp out and regroup.

The house I'd picked was a fairly nondescript McMansion settled on a corner a few streets into the neighborhood. Barricading the door with one of the huge wooden chairs, I threw my backpack on the scratched up leather sofa and dug out my radio.

I turned the power switch on and rocked the dial back and forth until the static stopped. The station would occasionally play music in between the cautionary announcements, and I was hoping I'd get lucky.

"There's nobody here."
"There's nobody here."
"There's nobody here."

A somber voice warbled over and over again, stuck on a loop, slightly muffled and

distorted. There's nobody here, there's nobody here, there's nobody here. It wasn't unusual for whatever music they were playing to skip and fade and get warped through the shitty connection, but something about this particular song, this line, seemed a little too ominous for my taste. Turning the radio off, I threw it back onto the sofa, determined to ignore the creeping unease the song had made me feel. Instead, I figured it would be a good time to explore my new residence while I still had some daylight left.

It was a really nice house, and under different circumstances I probably would have been intimidated to be standing in it. The carpet was plush, creamy white with dark accent rugs throughout. The furniture was all bright steel and sleek lines, very modern and minimal. It would have been beautiful if the cabinet doors weren't falling off the hinges in the kitchen, and if that

carpet wasn't spattered with weird dark spots (I refused to believe it was blood). There was an upstairs I would get to later, but with the radio station out of commission for the time being, I figured I'd see if there was anything else I could entertain myself with in the meantime. The living room had an entertainment center that didn't look like it'd been opened in months. Odd. Pulling the steel handle of the door, I looked to see a small fortune in electronic equipment housed in the cabinet, dust free and seemingly untouched. Big screen TV, DVD player, a bunch of smaller plastic boxes with wires attached that I didn't recognize. If they had all of this, maybe they'd have... bingo!

Blackwell GameLab console.

The power light was still on, blinking at me, teasing in the twilight. The controllers were tucked behind it, a Virtual

Reality headset perched next to them. Even better!

They even saved me the trouble of hunting for a game to play. The Utopia cartridge stuck up, a proud neon pink against the stark black of all of the other electronics. Same glossy plastic, same pixelated beachscape on the label.

The sun was setting outside cerulean sky streaked with orange and magenta and purple as stars winked in the distance, the white walls of the living room bathed in the light stolen from between the plastic blinds. I'd have to close those curtains soon, it wouldn't do for the Vipers to see me inside the house when they woke up, easy target and all that, but I still wanted to enjoy some daylight while I could.

And honestly, a small part of me hoped they would find me, so I wouldn't have to run anymore. The other part of me figured that that was fucking stupid, and that I needed to at least try to get the fuck out of Grove Heights while I still

could, if I still could.

I'd need to close the blinds soon, but it could wait. I grabbed the headset, jamming it over my eyes as I pressed the play button.

The home screen was exactly like I remembered it. A soft-focus beach town, bathed in the light of early morning, palm trees dotting the periphery as soft choral music floods into the speaker pieces. I heard a low droning sound, but I'm not sure what it could have been. Nothing mattered, nothing but this. This town and this life and these people that live on this perfect little beachside resort town and I'm one of them, how lucky is that?

The screen flashes, as the chipper music intensifies, but the buzzing does too. Why is it buzzing?

Doesn't matter. Nothing matters but this. Utopia is what matters. Wasn't there something about curtains? Yeah, but there's no danger here. None at all. Not in

Utopia. Not ever. And it's up to me to keep it that way, that's why I'm here.

More buzzing, now louder noises. Did something break? I don't think so. Nothing breaks here, not in this perfect reality. I'm so glad to be here. The air is warm and faintly salty from the ocean, the sand is smooth and the sky is clear crystalline blue just like the water. The people are friendly and the houses are huge and I don't need a job, though I'm sure there was something I was supposed to do at some point? If so, it doesn't matter now. Nothing really matters except good vibes, being excited, being distracted from something. This was a distraction, wasn't it? From what? I wasn't sure anymore, all I knew was Utopia.

And I could live like that.

And hey, it was cool. That guy on the radio was right.

There's nobody here.

ARGONAUT

He strokes his sparse and shapeless beard late into the morning, trying but ultimately failing to return to his dreams. The ubiquitous waves of the blanket lamp that enveloped him through the night have become but a nuisance. The hue of red that tinges the room is no longer a subtlety. Yet Eurus keeps on stroking his beard, pushing against the grain. The oily whiskers of his chin fall off their root and pierce into the spirals of his fingertips.

Outside, the clouds have gathered.

Cleansed, clothed and standing up, Eurus entertains himself sliding the palm of his hand up the sole glass wall of his confines. The curvature remains as unnoticed as it has always been. No reflection can ever be obtained either, just whiteness.

A soft wind blows into the colony, faint and serpentine.

He steps out and silence is broken by the sound of sand pressured against the soles of his boots. The ensuing conviction is merely an afterthought. He keeps on walking past the housing units, past the frigid tickle of the vibratory fence and stares at the rows of identical, state-issued, ships. Three seconds later, he raises his key to the sky and only one of the ships responds as the bulb in the tip of its crest emits a unique pattern of colored flashes. Three red, one green, two blue.

As mechanically as the sphere opens, Eurus taps his feet against the ship to relinquish as much sand from his soles as possible. First right, then left. The sand spills unto the asphalt, bright yellow, each grain dyed long ago. This man, of course, doesn't know any better, but he's sure this is a travesty. The real deserts must have been golden. Up above though, against the backdrop of the azure firmament, the clouds remain red.

He takes off.

The ship only slows down once he manually changes the predetermined course towards the mines and sets it to determine "Alternate Routes". Though highly illegal and impractical, Eurus has mastered a technique of route manipulation called "sailing", in which the passenger quickly shifts between optional routes and takes advantages of the minimal differences in spatial coordinates to create an arbitrary route. Since today is an authorized holiday, traffic is practically null.

He sails high above the colony. He can glance downward and see each dome become minimized, like eyeballs reclaimed by the sands as the domes are reduced to dead pixels before him. The view becomes intermittent as he begins to pierce through the clouds. The ship has now gained its normal speed, but it is only through the intervals created by sailing that the G-Force protectors are rendered disabled, and the desired effect can be felt at full blast. It is an effect that has gained erogenous connotations for Eurus. He keeps changing routes as long the pressure allows him to. At first it grows gradually and slowly in strength, then it peaks radically until every muscle in his body becomes pinned down in absolute stillness. Before the protectors react, the pressure has reached its peak and all of his thoughts feel compressed into a single, electric hum.

The ship inevitably stabilizes itself, but as soon as he regains mobility, Eurus slides out a large box from underneath his seat covered in aluminum foil, and takes out a 20-gauge Remington model 11. He immediately fires the load pointing underneath the interface module, thus effectively piercing the upholstery and severing the engine's link to its indestructible power source. All functions immediately shut down.

The ship falls. Eurus stares into the red desert of clouds and lusts after the dunes that crave his descent. He's swift enough to enjoy the contrast between the pressure and the ensuing lightness of free fall. As he floats away from his seat, the ship appears to gyrate around him. The egg cracks. Consciousness becomes but a pleasant loop, a mantra in an unknown language calling for sacred bliss.

Gravity returns. The ship has regenerated and Eurus places back the shotgun into the box before the scanners can trace it. Processing the anomaly, the ship simply resets to its default position mimicking the noise of a cassette returning to the beginning of side A. The landing is soft and perfect.

Eurus keeps stroking his beard. He can't sense the seat rest underneath his elbow, but he doesn't think about it. He takes a deep breath and exhales as he changes positions. He loses all grasp and falls from the bed headfirst into the floor. Cracking crystals fall around in a wave. All contents spill. Red.

All Credit to the Original Artists How Not to Curate on Social Media

WRITER
s h e e p

"All credit to the original artists." If you've browsed around a 'curated' social media account, you've likely encountered this (frustrating) phrase. It's a symbol of a symptom that seems increasingly common across social media: the insinuation that someone else's content is one's own. The quoted phrase is often tucked away somewhere in the profile where the casual follower may not think to look. To cut to the chase, it's an ignorant way to curate and, as a viewer of these types of accounts, it's sheer laziness. It makes me think you're in it for one thing, the likes. I don't blame you, but the problem is this: you're spotlighting and taking all of that spotlight for yourself. If you want to do this right, you need to actually credit the artists whose art you're reposting.

Repost culture is a double-edged sword. When used properly, it can be a great networking tool that not only gets artists more eyes on their work, but may also offer them chances they might not have had to collaborate with other artists. When used improperly, it often leads to people taking advantage of another person's content. Curating content is by definition professionally displaying, with expert knowledge, choice items in an exhibition. Have you ever been to an art gallery that doesn't credit the artist?

My own experience with this as an artist is not as extreme as that of others like Justin Wharton, David Stenbeck (Dovneon), or even Private Suite's own Eric Weidner (Seth Startix/Project Collage), but it's an experience we share nonetheless. While I can't speak for others, I can assure you that, in most cases, if you at least tag an artist whose piece you repost, you're going to get a 'thank you.' But, giving you the benefit of the doubt (for we all make mistakes), let's say you don't know the original artist; what then? Here's how to go from "curated" to curated.

Utilize reverse image searches such as TinEye or Google's Image Search feature. Oftentimes, if the image has been published elsewhere, especially by the artist, you'll normally find it among the various instances and tags of the image. This in turn will normally lead you to the source, the original artist, who you can either reach out to and ask if the pic is theirs, and ask if they're alright with you reposting it, or check their gallery to see if the picture is in their collection and then repost it with their social media tag. In the case where you contact the artist and they respond, the yes is almost always prefaced with 'please just credit me' in some form, although your mileage may vary from artist to artist.

Curating isn't just about you running an account for likes. It's about ensuring that those likes are also able to find the person who actually makes the content that they enjoy, and encouraging them to support that person too. Just because you are diverting people to other accounts does not mean you will not grow or that you will lose your viewership. As you grow and develop your platform, it's your job to ethically use the platform

and help grow others, especially as an account that is curating visual art.

"Well, I did that! I couldn't find the artist!" you say. "I still want to repost this!" Alright, fine. What I advise you to consider is this: caption the post and ask your viewership if they know who originated the piece. If you at least put the effort out there and make sure to follow up when you do find out who the source is, that's so much better than adding a typical social media disclaimer to your account. It harkens back to the Facebook privacy notice that everyone was posting in the not-so-distant past.

Yikes.

"So, what if I tag the wrong artist?" If this happens, most of the time people will tell you. In the instance that this happens, it's okay; just fix it and explain you made your best effort, and thank people for getting you the info you needed. Yes, people can be super defensive about artists getting credit, especially in this day and age. With the Internet being as amazing as it is, and with so many eyes capable of seeing one's content, credit is absolutely vital. We live in a world where we have to try and market ourselves to make an extra buck. It's an unfortunate side effect of that reality that success can hinge upon something as simple as the right person seeing something you posted. What is important in this reality is to ensure that we help each other in that venture. Reposting something says that you liked it enough to share it with others. When you have many "others" who are watching your account and the content you recycle, don't you think you should at least be doing what you can to support that artist as well?

It's something to think on, to say the least. A decent curator will do their best to give their viewership access to the artist - in a digital setting, that is often times as simple as a tag - which is what makes seeing that disclaimer, that "all credit to the original artists," so frustrating to see. There is so much to be gained from this simple practice; not only is it possible to help an artist grow, but it's a wonderful way to encourage them too. People like to do well, and like when they're told they excel at their hobbies. You could also gain the respect of your followers and the artists you credit.

The Joy of AESTHETICS WITH SETH STARTIX

Hello there friends. Before we begin I want to give a bit of background as to why I wanted to write this design primer. Over the last three years I've been creating daily collages in my personal creative exercise, Project-Collage. The goal behind this project for me has been to begin producing designs, exploring techniques, and ultimately allow the art to flow without overthinking or creating twenty versions before putting it out there. What I've learned during this time (and something that even my design degree or working in the field the last decade didn't immediately reveal to me) is that by keeping some simple constraints and going back to the basics, you can grow much faster and with more impact than if you do the all-too-common reaction we all have - "Oh this has to be perfect. This sucks. I'll just toss this and start over."

All this being said, I want to share a couple tips for getting started, some basic principles, and point you to a few tools out there that can get you on the road to expressing your artistic visions - or simply creating something you find beautiful. For some this might be a reiteration of things you already know if you've been designing for years, but for others just getting started designing hopefully what we cover here will provide you with some guidance and enable you to get those creative juices flowing!

Tips for Getting Started



Create Constraints

Creating constraints is a great way to keep things simple while allowing you to sharpen your skills. By keeping your flow and process within certain boundaries, you'll find yourself more willing to try things out.

Suggestions for constraints: Give yourself a quota (1 piece per week, day, etc) and a maximum time to spend on a piece. Try designing a piece or series with a limited color palette.



Research & You

Allow research to be part of your routine – especially times when you're not feeling motivated or simply nothing is coming to you. Find ideas, techniques or elements that you're attracted to.

Check out these topics if you're looking for some starting points: retrofuturism, 80s/90s sci-fi magazine covers, digital brutalism, and constructivism.



Let it Rest

Sometimes you'll hit a wall, that's completely normal. Don't be afraid to put a piece down and come back later – or if another idea really takes shape, shift over to that one. Often coming back another time to a design that you felt was unfinished will give you a new idea or perhaps just that missing touch.



Don't Fear Feedback

Feedback is always good, however discerning which types are constructive and which aren't takes practice and patience. Keeping your art and your ego separate can take time, but is extremely important to your growth. The positive is, the more comfortable you become with receiving feedback overall – the more you'll learn.

Remember to always be patient when asking for feedback. Finding the right group of peers or community can also be a huge help. The aesthetics chat in Private Suite's Discord is a great spot!

Design Anytime. Anywhere.

Photoshop, GIMP, and a variety of other desktop applications are some great examples of tools you can use on your PC or laptop. However, in the era of smartphones, you can literally create anytime, anywhere. The following are a few of my personal recommendations:



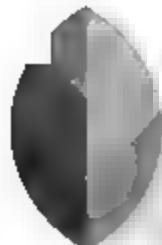
Bazaar (iOS & Android)

Bazaar is my personal favorite for creating wherever I'm at without feeling like I'm sacrificing capability. Easily being able to set a canvas size, bring in images, cut, mask, layer, and apply filters is simple but great. As you use the app more, you can accomplish some pretty cool techniques.



Adobe mobile apps (iOS & Android)

Photoshop Mix and Photoshop Fix are some great choices for designing anywhere. I'm not the biggest fan of their user flows on the apps, but they still deliver a lot of capability for a mobile workspace to compose pieces along with some great cross-application features.



Snapseed (iOS & Android)

Google's photo editor is free and pretty great all around for adding some finishing touches to a piece. Being able to edit curves, grain, vignettes, and adjust color balance makes this app a great tool to have in your workflow.

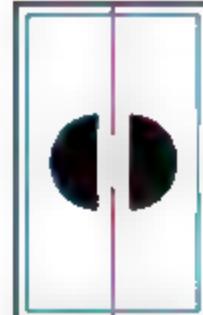


Layout & Composition

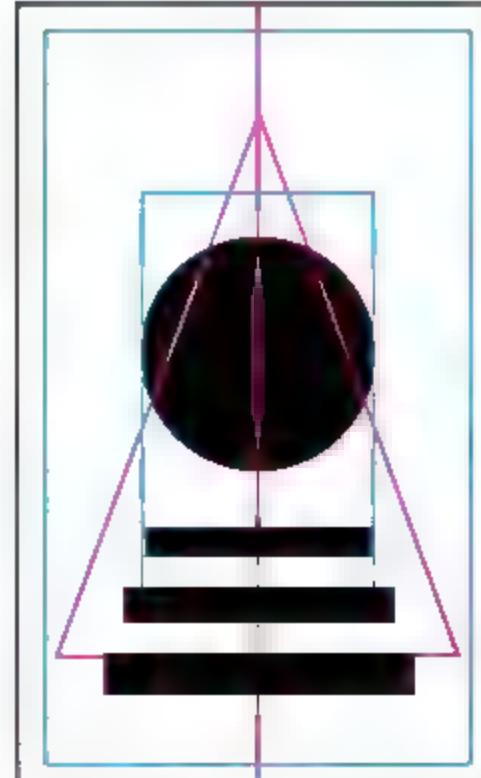
When a composition is visually balanced, every part of it works together to keep the viewer following the contents of the design. This can be achieved through several methods.

Symmetrical balance is the most comfortable as each of its parts maintain equal visual weight and distance.

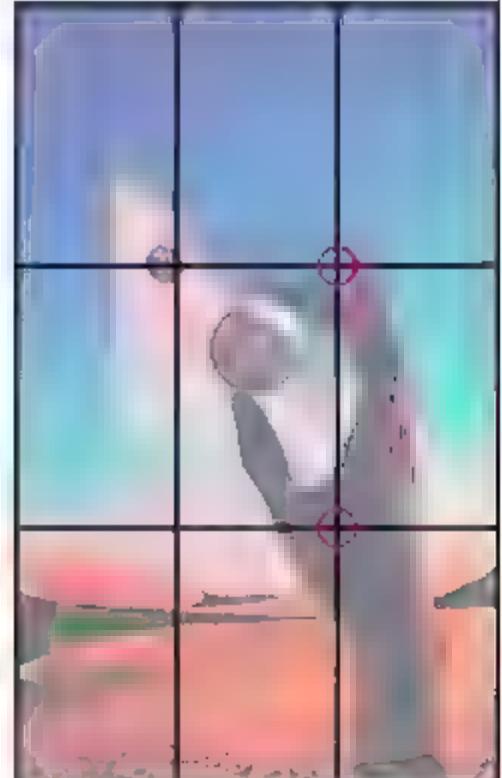
Asymmetrical balance is the counter, utilizing unequal visual weight on each side of the composition. However through balancing smaller elements and the surrounding negative space, the overall piece achieves balance.



Asymmetrical balance



Establishing a focal point and creating hierarchy with elements following a triangular direction is an easy way to begin to experiment with simple yet effective compositions.



The rule of thirds is a great basic composition guideline. Using the four intersecting points can help you with placing your subject, establishing a horizon, and balancing the surrounding space.

A Few Formal Elements of Design

Think of the foundational elements of design as ingredients that can be combined in different ways to form recipes. Becoming familiar with these basic elements and their usage together over time will allow you to begin dissecting designs you see out in the world.

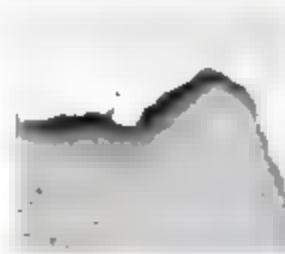
Line & Weight



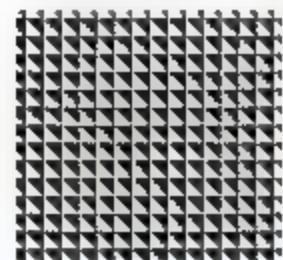
Shape



Texture

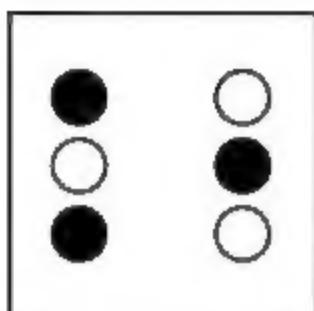


Pattern



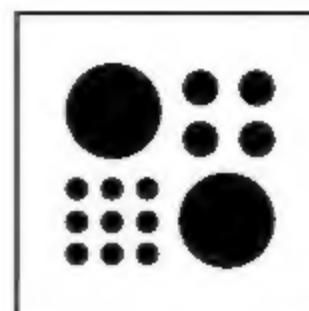
Gestalt Principles

Understanding the theory of gestalt and how it applies to visual design is fundamental to any artist's skillset. The basic principle of gestalt psychology is "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." So basically there is an innate programming in our brain which makes us perceive the whole with a greater and more simpler meaning than the individual parts which it's composed of.



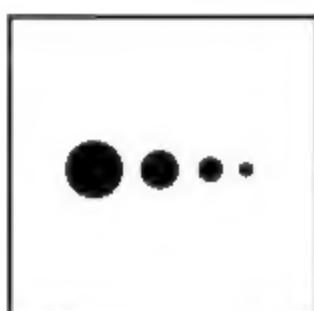
Similarity

The principle of Similarity states that things which share visual characteristics such as shape, size, color, texture, value or orientation will be seen as belonging together.



Proximity

Proximity is the principle in which we visually see objects that are near or 'proximate' to each other and then psychologically group them together.



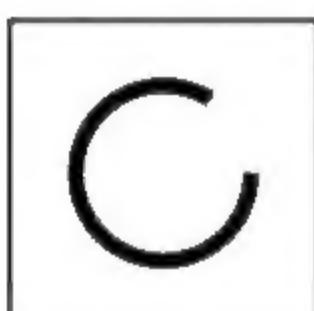
Continuity

The principle of Continuity states once the eye begins to follow something, it will continue traveling in that direction until it encounters another object.



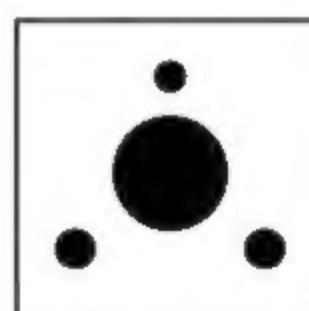
Figure & Ground

Figure/ground refers to the relationship between positive elements and negative space. In certain unstable relationships of the two, your perception will constantly jump between them.



Closure

With closure, we instead combine parts to form a simpler whole. Our eye fills in the missing information to form the complete figure.



Order & Symmetry

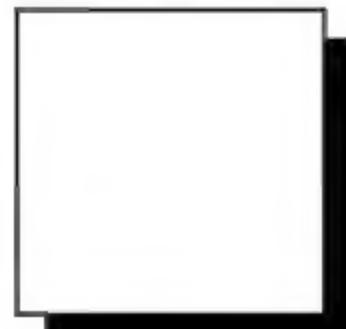
The principle of Order and Symmetry states that elements that are symmetrical to each other tend to be perceived as a unified group. This in turn forms balance and stability, and even calmness.

Ways to Indicate Depth

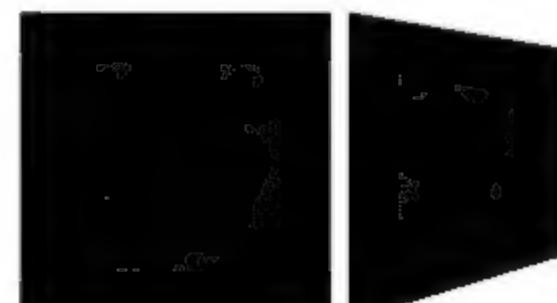
Depth is one of the primary principles that is first noticed in a design. Depth is what catches someone's eyes. Adding depth to your art will help it burst off the page, or conversely, pull the viewer in. It adds interest to what might otherwise be a very static composition.

Depth and the perception of three dimensions is not something only achieved in 3D rendering software, however it does take much more practice to master in two-dimensional compositions.

The following are some basic principles to begin to create depth in your work:



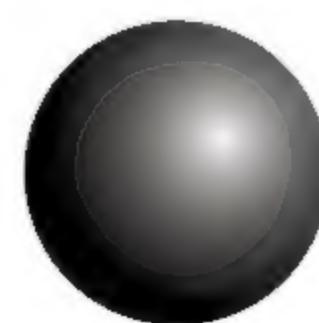
Overlap



Foreshortening



Size and Scale



Gradation/Diffusion

Final Word

While this is by far not exhaustive, I hope this primer helps you explore and learn new ways to approach creating art. I'm working on starting a more involved hands-on tutorial channel soon, but until then - have fun and express yourself <3

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